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FUNERAL SERMONS AND OUTLINE ADDRESSES

AN AID FOR PASTORS

COMPILED AND EDITED BY
WILLIAM E. KETCHAM, D.D.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY REV. RUSSELL H. CONWELL D.D.,LL.D.

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
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INTRODUCTION

BY RUSSELL H. CONWELL.

The seeds of the forest seem wasted when the land is already overgrown. But the waste appears trivial compared with the loss of good thoughts and comforting messages which have been beautifully and thoughtfully expressed by the wise and good and which no kind friend of man has preserved.

In this volume some of the most helpful ideas have been saved from oblivion and some of the best messages preserved for further use. Men are what they think: and he who furnishes mankind with inspiring thoughts is their noblest benefactor. This book is a good deed. This collection of thoughts and sermons will help those who do the work of ministering angels, to do more of that work and do it better. We cannot do less than to express our gratitude to the compiler and the publisher. The seeds of blessing contained in this book have been transferred from the shade and rocks to the barren fields and planted where they are needed, and where they will find favorable environment to develop into the largest fruitage.

What a sermon this volume is, as a whole, when we appreciate the exhortation it suggests to save and promulgate Christian ideas. How few are the manuscripts, books, inscriptions recovered from the libraries and tombs of Babylon, Egypt and Greece!

Oh, if we had the literary treasures of all the ages intact! What an array of good deeds could have been shown today, if many had done what so few tried to do, and had preserved all the best compositions of all the great and good.

We cannot hope to be original and creative in all directions, and the busy heart-loaded pastor has but little time to dig the ore for his plow or sword. David in distress needed Goliath's sword already forged and polished. He who preserved the sword and gave it to David seems entitled to love and honor with him who wielded it in defense of his country. Let us not give way to pride and say foolish things because they are our own. But it is wisest and most devotional to think of the mourner and the hopeless, and give to them the best things no matter who may seem to have uttered them first. One cannot avoid the thought that the authors of these sermons and addresses will be glad even to know that the servants of Christ are using effectively still the messages they supposed would die with their delivery. They may feel grateful to those who renew the life and beauty of these children of their hearts.

Of all the multiplied forms and places in which Christ appears this volume shows him most emphatically as the Comforter. This phase of his divine character can be most effectively shown to the weeping, and can be studied and copied with the sincerest devotion. May these messages be "links in the chain which binds Earth to Heaven."

Russell H. Conwell.

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FUNERAL SERMONS

AND

OUTLINE ADDRESSES.

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION.

BY F. W. FARRAR, D.D.

The power of his resurrection.—PHILIPPIANS iii. 10.

THERE is no sublimer fact in the spiritual history of man than his steady, unwavering belief in his own immortality. Encompassed on every side by darkness, he yet proclaims in every age his unalterable conviction that there is light beyond. Tossed always by storm, and often lost in blinding mists, he yet believes that he is steering straight for that haven which eye has never seen. Faced by the spectre of death, he still perseveres in the certainty that life is all and that death is naught; and when the soul seems to perish he holds that it does but pass, with the wings of the dove, to life and spring and heaven's bloom and the bosom of his God.

I. **We may loose the silver cord and break the golden bowl: man will still believe that God is for him.** Take him into the churchyard, wrinkled with its green mounds, and ask with scorn, "Are all these who lie here immortal?" and he will say, "They are." Stoop in the sepulchre and take a

handful of dust, and ask, "Was this immortal?" and he will answer with his indomitable "Yes." It is all the more sublime because of the obtrusive violence and tremendous volume of the facts by which it is confronted. Nature and experience and the oblivion of the grave seem to laugh it to scorn. Man lives amid a universe of death. The very ground we tread on is full of the dust of death, of the material particles which have been used by living organisms since the time of Adam; dead genera, dead species, dead generations, dead empires, dead races. As far as outward facts are concerned, as we walk by sight only and not by faith, death seems to be the sole universal despot, and the prodigy of life to be ended with the greater worm. The great and the small, the rich and the poor, are there; servant and master are mingled in undistinguishing death. We know very well that the same fate awaits us, and awaits us soon. The dead are the more in number, and long before another Easter has come round many of us who now sit here will have joined that greater number. Day by day brings us nearer on the downward slope to the rolling waters of that prodigious tide which has swallowed up our fathers. Thinner that curtain of darkness than a spider's web through which day by day, year by year, one by one, we all shall pass, and each one of us shall pass alone. And how strange, how oppressive, how awful, how unbroken is the silence

of all these unnumbered dead! From the other side of the curtain not one gleam of light, not one syllable of sound, from all these millions has ever come. The wise man enters the darkness, but out of it he cannot speak even the three words to us which we would barter for all his wisdom. Dante has nothing more henceforth to tell us, nor Shakespeare, nor Milton; childhood and innocence can whisper from it no syllable of consolation to the breaking hearts of father or mother. And generation after generation the children of men, wise and unwise, innocent and guilty, believe in their immortality with a faith insensibly sublime.

II. **How is this?** It is partly because there is something in man far above the evidence of his senses. What the lips of silent death cannot or will not reveal to him, that God whispers into his soul; and therefore he believes insensibly that death is the semblance, and that life is the reality, even if the mind sinks into dotage and the body into dust. Among nations unenlightened by special revelation this belief has faded into vague hope, and a life of sin does more by far than anything else to weaken and destroy it; but to us who are Christians, to all who are the true children of the Kingdom, God hath in these last days spoken by His Son, and given to us in Him, not a fond expectation, but a sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life. It is Christ

alone who in the highest sense has brought life and immortality to light. The tomb is dark no longer; the message of Easter has made it luminous, it is bright henceforth with angel presences; we have learned by fellowship with His suffering to know Christ and the power of His Resurrection.

That Resurrection is the central fact of all Christianity. To the Christian it needs no further proof; as certainly as we live, as certainly as we shall die, so certainly we believe that Christ rose and that with Him we too shall rise.

III. **But we must never forget that as the Resurrection is not an isolated, so it is not a secondary fact.**—The apostles, the early witnesses of the Church of God, put it in the very forefront of their testimony. By the stupendous importance of its meaning, it stands side by side with the Creation. That was the victory of Omnipotence over nothingness; this is the victory of Omnipotence over dissolution. Both are parts of the same divine universal work of love, the redemption of mankind. There are some, there are many, in these days who would fain persuade us that Christianity would still be Christianity if we gave up altogether the supernatural. It is a delusion, as St. Paul told us nearly nineteen centuries ago. If no living Christ issued forth from the garden-sepulcher, that becomes the grave not of man only, but of a religion, with all the hopes

based upon it, and all the splendid enthusiasms which it has inspired. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God";—you see how little St. Paul evades the full brunt of the issue—"we are found false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ." If the dead are not raised, if Christ be not raised, then your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins, ye have not then been redeemed; "then they also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." St. Paul confesses that if we give up the resurrection we give up everything with it.

THE LAST CHANGE.

BY THE REV. R. ANDREW GRIFFIN.

My change.—JOB xiv. 14.

THIS was a very natural mode of expression for the Patriarch Job. His life was a weary monotony at the time he thus spoke. Day after day there was the same repressing presence of pain, reproach, and temptation. How regularly they came; how tardily they withdrew, even for an hour. What a gospel rang out of the word *Change* into the ear and heart of Job. You and I may be feeling the monotony of being; let

us cheer our hearts with meditation on the certain change awaiting us all.

I. **It might have been an unwelcome change.** It is to some. The cypress of the grave casts its shadow all across their lives. But Jesus came to save us from the fear of death, as well as from all other fears. Death is robbed of its real sting; take heed lest, through unbelief, you invest it with an imaginary one.

II. **It will be a great change.** Our familiar calling, the body, our relations in the world, must be left for a noble calling—a spiritual body—and for the spirits of the just. Yet, in heaven, the latest comer feels no sense of strangerhood. Although all things are so different from those he has just left, he feels heaven is his home.

III. **It may be a sudden change.** Sudden death, in the case of holy men, is a mark (I should think) of the Divine favor, as far as those taken from the world are concerned.

It is dreadful when a man is snatched away, not from honest labor and patient suffering, but from yielding to indolence, and fretfulness or doubts.

IV. **It is likely to be an unattended change.** We must die alone; the only one from your church, your village, your town. Yet, though alone in the article of death, what a goodly company of angels shall receive you and bear you to rest.

V. It must be a final change. The experience of celestial beings, while in no painful sense monotonous, will know nothing of "change"; for our idea of change is connected with painful separation and uncertainty.

EXTRACT OF ADDRESS AT THE FUNERAL OF CHIEF JUSTICE CHASE.

BY JOHN HALL, D.D., LL.D.

NOR do I shrink from speaking here to the many younger men now in the keen competition of life, sometimes hopeful, sometimes cast down. He whom we lay with honor in the grave to-day started in life with many advantages, among which I place a vigorous body, physical courage, a mind well-balanced, enough of family history to beget healthy self-respect, boyhood and a youth not enervated by easy circumstances, but trained to labor and to wrestle with difficult affairs, and so gaining strength and the safe consciousness of its possession. These are all God's good gifts; but they are not exceptional. How many of you have had as much or more of what is commonly thought the basis of success. Make the most of what has been given you, nor wait for exceptional opportunities. When men are what they ought to be, somehow God—in whose great world no power is lost—makes the oppor-

tunities. Had we to choose for a meed of reputation for ourselves between his success in finance and his career as an advocate, who of us would fail to take the latter? We should choose the clear light and the true love in which he saw freedom, and stood up for the weak against the strong, when men said, "There is a fine young man who has ruined himself to-day." Young man, rising to distinction and power, the main question concerning you is—have you a conscience that is sensitive to light, that can no more be led to make the abominable attractive than the photographer's plate to flatter? If you have, you may never be as he was, in manner, or place, or training, a statesman, but you can be, each of you, every inch a man.

Men and brethren, a short week ago, Chief Justice Chase did his duty on the bench, and without warning the death-blow came, and to-day we bury him. So you, too, may die. Are you living under the power of the world to come? Do you believe the truth? "As a matter of evidence," it was lately said to an eminent lawyer, "Can the Bible be sustained?" "As a matter of evidence," was the reply, "I do not see how any candid mind can question it." Have you weighed this evidence? Have you accepted the conclusion? Are you living by it? Are you resting on Christ as Saviour, hearing Him as teacher, obeying Him as Lord? For, men and

brethren, this is true life—not the means only, but the actual beginning of life eternal.

And one word more—immediately to those whose bereavement is a sorrow to the whole nation—be thankful to God that the course of one so justly dear to you has ended, unstained by any sacrifice of the State to self, without any deliberate act that needs to be extenuated. Be thankful yet more for the trust you have that he was a Christian; be Christians also, that you may resume in the skies the happy intercourse of earth. His very virtues lay responsibilities on you; the lack of them would be conspicuous in you. On the other hand, let every memory of what he was be a voice to you, saying, "Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE.

"*Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is.*"—MARK xiii. 33.

THE veiling of the future is a merciful dispensation of Providence. It is best for man it should be so.

1. The nervous system is hereby screened from the fright and shock of an immediate view of "the king of terrors."

2. We are permitted to hold undisturbed pos

session of all the innocent joys of life up to the time of our departure.

3. It has morally a salutary effect on all classes. It deters the rebellious by visibly hanging the sword of justice every moment over their heads; it tends to keep the righteous awake, by calling on them hourly to put on the whole armor of God.

The words of the text had some reference to the peculiar temporal circumstances of those who heard them. But Christ did not confine His meaning to these alone.

In the consideration of this passage let two things be noticed:—

I. **The fact of life's uncertainty.** Two kindred facts first claim attention. These are:—

The certainty of death.

Death is inevitable. Man is born to die. Nature teaches him that his end will come.

The nearness of death.

Man must die soon. How soon he cannot tell.

1. *Men are called to their account in the midst of their worldly business.* Their employment may be laudable, their aims good, their motives right.

But, when "the time" arrives, they must leave all.

2. *Men are also taken in the very act of sin and rebellion against God.* The Scriptures furnish instances of the sudden doom of those who were in rebellion: the contemporaries of Noah, the

fellow-townsmen of Lot, Korah, and his companions.

3. *Not only the wicked are liable to sudden death.* No degree of morality, faith, or holiness can shield from the stroke.

Many good men have even desired to go suddenly.

The first death was the sudden call of righteous Abel.

II. **The plain practical duty which it teaches.** "*Take ye heed.*"

Many are heedless and unprepared to die.

This heedlessness arises from—

The absorbing nature of earthly riches.

Idleness.

Ignorance.

Heedlessness will cause you to miss heaven.

It will land you in the place of torment.

It will render you unfit for the coming of the "king of terrors."

Watch and pray.

Live habitually prepared for your end.

Observe these three things:

1. *Habitually believe in Christ.* All preparation for eternity lies there. Christ is all in all.

2. *Habitually commune with God.* Communion with God takes place with conversion. Adoption gives us connection, and opens the intercourse between the soul and God.

3. *Habitually aim at Christian consistency.* We

owe duty both to God and man. Religion must begin with God; it must extend to society.

Here is a warning to those who are neither watching nor praying.

Here is a reproof to the lukewarm professor and the backslider.

Here is encouragement to the earnest, expectant, watching believer.

SELECTION FROM A TRIBUTE TO AN EMINENT LAYMAN.

BY W. V. KELLEY, D.D.

DEATH is a great revealer, and, in turning out some lights turns on others; it extinguishes the light of intelligence that shone from the eye, the light of cheer that fell from off his face into the lives of others, but it turns on the light of publicity and concentrates the attention of men upon the character and record of him who has gone. We are often surprised to find the man poor whom we supposed to have been rich; the man whom we thought honest is sometimes found to be short in his accounts. In those lives where clatter has passed for power with those who had not opportunity to weigh the facts, we are surprised, when we come to review their record, that so little of solidity is discoverable. When the record of some men is cremated in the fierce

furnace of post-mortem criticism, we are amazed at the small residuum, and that it is nothing but ashes. But there are men who are not so when they die. There are some who are found entire in their characters and records when submitted to the fierce heat of judgment; so indestructible that we cannot reduce or diminish them by any examination. The wonder grows on those who only had a distant knowledge that a man so solid was here, and they had not weighed him to know how heavy he was. I believe that we are commemorating today the life of a man who looks larger when he is dead than when he was alive. There are reasons for this. One was the exceeding quietness of the man; he sounded no trumpets, made no noise called no attention to his doings. He was one of the stillest men in the church. He was a silent worshiper in the house of God, sitting with a prayerful and earnest face, doing his work peaceably, quietly, with absolute fidelity, carrying it all on his heart. He was a quiet man in all his activity. Did you ever see a man do his work with less bustle and noise? He was a quiet man, and, as has been said, in his spirit, in his natural shrinking from publicity or any kind of self-advertising.

* * * * * *

And now this laborious, devoted, trusted, and honored man has finished his course. It may be

said that he goes from us in his prime, just when his usefulness and influence were at their greatest, his wisdom most widely confessed, his words most respected, and his services most prized. Like some long-swelling wave that rises on the dark bosom of the deep until it crests in whiteness, and at its climax flings its crystal toward the sky, our brother's life, gathering volume and value through all the years, now at its summit breaks into the heavens. From the zenith of attainment and the top of action he passes to render his account to the Master whom he served. The toiler is appointed to the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

We have noticed him bowing more and more under the weight of years and labors and sorrows. We marked his stooping shoulders as he went up and down the aisle as usher from Sabbath to Sabbath. When his wife died that blow struck him from his place in the aisle and settled him in his pew, where he sat in silence not without tears.

> "His journey ends in welcome to the weary,
> And heaven, the heart's true home, is reached at last."

He has been greeted in that eternal dwelling-place by the bride whom, nearly fifty years ago, he took for the building of his earthly home.

And now when all is over we hear a great voice falling from the skies above his record as brother, husband, father, friend, and officer; and the voice says, "Servant of God, well done!"

"THE SAINTS OF GOD."

BY THE REV. J. B. C. MURPHY.

"*Whose names are in the Book of Life.*"—PHIL. IV. 3.

SOME few of those names, my brethren, are familiar enough even to us, but only a very few. By far the greater number are known to God alone. By far the greater number of the redeemed in Paradise, that countless white-robed throng seen by St. John in his vision standing before the Throne of God, must be reckoned among

> "The unknown good that rest
> In God's still memory folded deep."

These were "the bravely dumb who did their deed, and scorned to blot it with a name;" yet their names are written in Heaven. While they were in the world, the world was the richer for their lives; when they passed out of it the world was the poorer for their deaths. But the world was as unconscious of the one fact as of the other: and many names which the world never honored, and never heard of—names by which the world was never stirred, are names which have been written by God in the Book of Life.

Some of these servants of God we ourselves have known, my brethren, and loved most truly. Some of them, indeed, were our very own; God had given them to us, and us to them. Very near were they to us in the ranks of "the Church

Militant here on earth," and out of the very ranks of the Church Expectant in Paradise they seem to come in order to be near us again.

In many churches is celebrated All Saints' Day. One feature, and a very beautiful one, of that Festival is that in keeping it we give praise to Almighty God for the lives and for the deaths of thousands and tens of thousands of whom we have never even heard. Their names are unknown to us, and even if by an angel's whisper those names should this very hour be revealed to us, they would mean nothing to us—they would have no power to stir our hearts. But though we may never know them, on this side the grave, they are names which are written in the Book of Life. And in commemorating "the *unknown* good," my brethren, we acknowledge the wisdom, and the goodness, and the power, and the love of God, to whom *none* are unknown. From His sight no single soul is for a moment hidden, from the hour of birth to the hour of death, and through all the mysterious aftertime that follows death. While in its wide love and all-embracing charity the Festival reminds us somewhat of a touching sight which may be witnessed at the present day, on certain Sunday evenings, in the town of Algiers. Here, on a mighty cliff overhanging the blue waters of the Mediterranean, is performed sometimes a short Service in memory of the dead (the unknown as well as the known) who have

been lost at sea; whose last agony was witnessed by the all-seeing Eye alone; whose last resting-place must remain secret and unknown until the great day when the sea shall give up her dead.

Days come and go with the silent revolutions of years, bringing with them many thoughts; teaching us many lessons. We learn from it comforting thoughts "concerning them which are asleep." **We are taught that those whom we are accustomed to speak of and to think of as dead, are in truth living**—aye, at this very moment. They are living and praising the same God Whom they loved on earth, in a life more perfect and more blessed than this.

Then, by reminding us that we who are left behind, and they who are gone before, are worshiping the same Lord, are partakers of the same Life, are members of the same body, the Festival helps us to realize the blessedness of the "Communion of Saints." As we read in God's Word how "blest are the departed" who have died in the Lord, we are moved to thank God with overflowing hearts for the rest and peace into which many a beloved one has entered after the battle, and the weariness, and the fever of life.

But there remains yet another reason for commemorating all God's Saints, and it is this, **that we may be moved to run with patience, as they did, the weary race before us,** "looking unto

Jesus." "Grant us grace," we pray, "*so to follow* Thy blessed Saints." Do we mean it? Would we have God take us at our word? Let us then, my brethren, lift up our eyes, and look upon that "great multitude which no man could number;" let us listen to that question, "Who are these? whence came they?" and let us give good heed to the answer—"These are they which came out of great tribulation."

My brethren, do you hear that? Well, *now*, do we mean it when we say, "Grant us grace so to follow Thy blessed Saints?" Are we ready to tread the thorny path of pain and suffering "which Saints and martyrs trod of old"? Ah! God forgive us! would we not escape the tribulation if we could, yet share the bliss unto which, out of that same tribulation, God's servants have come? Yet the only "way to Heaven," as an old saying has it, "is by Weeping Cross."

"A traveler was coming out of the country," so the story goes, "to visit Jerusalem. He had left a village, beautiful with groves and palm-trees, sheltered by some of the great mountains of that Eastern land. As he journeyed along what was to him an unknown thoroughfare, he inquired the way to the city, and they told him, adding that he would have to pass by 'The Place of a Skull,' which is called Calvary. The traveler asked if there was no other way to the City, without passing by Calvary, and they answered,

'No, you can only reach Jerusalem by that way.'" My brethren, *we* too must pass by Calvary; we must be prepared for "great tribulation" if we would reach the Heavenly Jerusalem at the end of the journey of life.

Dear brethren, **the time is short—use it, waste it no more.** Work on for God, and man, and Heaven, while the working day is yours; work on patiently, quietly, in faith, content to do your duty, and then to pass away. Whether you make a name in the world, or whether you pass out of it unheeded and unknown, matters not at all, if your names have been written by God in Heaven. Do we hope to come to those "unspeakable joys" which our thoughts are full of as we consider the dear departed? Are we living as those who have the right to hope?

In a hospital at Scutari, during the Crimean war, a soldier lay dying. He had lain there, watched by his nurses, for many a long hour, apparently unconscious. On a sudden he rose up in bed, and with a voice which startled them all—so strong it was—he shouted, "Yes, I am here!" They laid him back upon his bed exhausted and breathless with his effort, gently soothed him, and asked him what he was doing. "Oh!" he said, "I heard the roll-call of my regiment after the battle, and I was answering my name."

"When the roll-call of Christ's great army shall be called at the end of the battle, tell me,

my brethren," says the one who relates the story, "shall you and I be among those whose names are still in the Book of Life? Shall we be among those who say, 'Yes, here by the grace of God, here!'"

CERTAINTY OF DEATH.

BY EDWIN LOCKE, D. D.

"*We must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.*"—2 SAM. xiv. 14.

I. **Death certain.**

DEATH stares in faces upon all sides. The fields the other day were green; now they are brown. The tree that stood by our door last year was a thing of beauty; now nothing is left but the old lifeless trunk. In our childhood there were strong men who were wonders to us because of their deeds of manly strength. Where are they now? Go read their names on the grave-stones, or see them pass by the gate with decay and death written in every lineament of their faces.

So God teaches in His word. Text, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away." 1. Pet. i. 24.

II. **Often sudden.** Read the columns of the newspapers, and notice how many have been fairly hurled into eternity.

How few really expect death when it comes!

God would teach us that life is brief; "But a hand-breadth;" "A vapor;" "A flower of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven." That its end is uncertain. Christ said that He would come "as a thief in the night."

"Ye know not what shall be to-morrow."

III. **Death ends all.** "Water spilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again."

Dives was told of a great gulf which was *fixed.*

The foolish virgins found the door shut for all eternity.

"It is appointed unto man once to die, but after which the judgment." Heb. ix. 27.

IV. **A preparation necessary.** All realize this as far as this world goes, but few seem to realize its importance when the next world is taken into consideration.

We fail to understand that "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18), and need to be prepared for.

Because we are strong it seems to us as if we would live here always, and we fail to heed Christ's words, "Be ye also ready."

1. *How we are to make this preparation.*

"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Jno. xiv. 6.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the

shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Ps. xxiii. 4.

"O, death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' 1 Cor. xv. 55.

V. Conclusion. Quote text.

"Death comes with reckless footsteps
To the hall and hut:
Think you death will tarry, knocking,
Where the door is shut?"

"Therefore be ye also ready."

SUDDEN DEATH.

BY A. P. PEABODY, D. D.

Ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the son of man cometh.—MATTHEW XXV. 13.

NATURE has her times and seasons. Throughout her inanimate and irrational kingdoms, bloom and decay, youth and age, life and death, succeed each other at periods that can be foreseen and calculated. The flowers discharge their bright ministry of love, elaborate their seeds, and die not till their work is done. The hoary oak retains its vigor for ages, is ages more in dying, and falls at last amid a giant progeny that has grown up to fill its place. The

insect race fade with the leaf, and die with the dying year. Their span is brief; but they have grown old in it, have finished their work, and drop into timely dissolution. Thus is it with all the tribes of animated nature. No infantile diseases prey upon them; no fever throbs in their young veins; no palsy blights their active powers; death, except by violence, comes not at cock-crowing or in the morning, but only at eventide. But for man death chooses all seasons. The cradle is his; and the first ecstasy of maternal joy is subdued into bitter wailing. Childhood and youth are his; the laughing eye is quenched, the gleeful shout hushed. The prime of manhood and womanhood is his; he blights the freshness of hope and promise, and clothes in the garments of the grave those bound the most closely by the ties of life. He often sends no summons before him; but floats unseen on the breeze, and has aimed his shaft before his approach is perceived. Premature and sudden dissolution has its voices for the living. To some of them let us now give heed.

I. **Such instances of death are a proof and a pledge of man's immortality,** and are adapted to make us feel this truth as well as believe it. Here is a child, budding with golden promise, the mind just awakened to self-consciousness, the heart twining its young affections around all that is fair and good, native innocence just ripening

into a virtue of choice and effort. Suddenly the decree goes forth,—"Cut it down." A wind passes over it, and it is gone. But why? It cumbered not the ground. It blessed the soil where it grew, and has left a balmy fragrance where it fell. Can it have become extinct, while so many clodlike existences, inane as the earth they tread, are suffered to live on? O, no! Its root cannot have withered, though its stem is crushed. It has only been transplanted, where softer zephyrs, warmer suns, richer dews, shall make its bloom perennial.

II. **Only with thoughts and beliefs of a higher sphere and life can we interpret the sudden and premature removals of the pure and good.** Without a higher life, man is the greatest anomaly in existence,—the only broken column in creation. Everything else lives its span, and does its work. But man "cometh forth as a flower and is cut down; he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not." With him everything is incomplete and unfinished. A human life that seems entire in itself, reaches a natural period, and comes to the grave in full age, like a shock of corn in its season, is the rare exception, not the rule. And as God, having endowed man more highly than the rest of His creatures, cannot love him less, the mere light of nature might prompt the belief in a higher state of being, where this seeming incompleteness will be filled up, where defeated aims

broken plans, and unfinished works may all be consummated. Everything else we can comprehend in the cycle bounded by earth and time. If man comes not within that cycle, it must be because his interests and fortunes belong to the larger cycle of eternity. It is this only that brings man into harmony with the rest of the creation, and makes his being anything else than an insolvable enigma.

III. Sudden and premature deaths among the innocent and holy are precious, as **giving us a nearer view of heaven than we can otherwise gain.** When the chariot and horses of fire bore Elijah to paradise, think you not that it brought the home of the blessed very close to the mental vision of those who saw him go? One who had just walked with them in the beauty of holiness, and spoken to them in the name of the Lord, whose wise and pious counsels were yet recent in their ears, the impress of whose energy and love was still fresh upon their hearts, had passed from them to heaven, and they could follow him thither, behold him the same there as here, and feel that the traits of character which had so closely bound them to him were congenial with the world which he had entered. Similar is our feeling, when our worthy friends are suddenly translated from our homes. The sky remains parted; we trace their passage; we follow them within the veil; and, through the vivid impressions which they have

left us of their characters, we seem to see them still, the same in all that was good, entering upon the joys of paradise, sweeping the harps of heaven. It is as if a gem of unearthly radiance, which had shone in our dwellings, which we had handled and sported in the sunlight, and gazed at in all its rainbow tints, had been snatched from our grasp, planted in the sky, and made a star. Impressions of this kind cannot be so strong, where long decay or infirmity has preceded death, so as to suspend the active energies of the soul, and to give scope only for the passive virtues.

IV. The sudden, and what we call the untimely, death of those who are prepared to die may be **regarded as a relief and blessing to them.** To survivors it is, indeed, unspeakably appalling. The contrast, the revulsion of feeling, the instantaneous prostration of plans and scattering of hopes, the blight which it seems to cast on every familiar scene and object, all conspire to aggravate the severity of the stroke. But from how many conflicts and sorrows has the departed one been saved! He has not seen earthly objects fade one by one from his sickening gaze. His heart has not bled anew each day in the sundering of cherished ties. He has not known the bitterness of death. He has been spared the last adieus.

V. **I cannot sympathize with the dread of sudden death, as such, which many feel.** Only give

me the full assurance that I am prepared to meet my God, that I am leading a Christian life, that my prevalent frame of mind is spiritual and heavenly, and I would even pray to be spared the slow decay of nature or disease, the sad farewell, the parting conflict,—I would beg of my Master to let me work in His vineyard till the very last moment, and close my life with my labors.

VI. **Let me, then, urge you to live prepared for the sudden sundering of domestic and social ties.** Unreconciled enmities, open wounds, unquenched anger, arm death with a sting of tenfold sharpness. They have often cost bitter weeping for years over the graves of the injured. Is one who was the subject of other than kind sentiments called away from our circle? However ready we were in his lifetime to cast all the blame upon him, death will soften his faults and heighten his virtues to our view, so that we shall feel ourselves alone guilty; and love, reviving over the lifeless dust, will vent itself in vain longings to grasp the shadowy spirit in our reconciling embrace, to ask forgiveness of the ear forever sealed, to call forth the once wonted glow of affection on the cheek forever pale. And if we ourselves go hence with such wounds unhealed, must they not rankle in our disembodied spirits, cloud the light of eternity as it dawns upon us, embitter the streams of paradise as they roll by us, it may be to the scene or tidings of another's unwarned doom.

VII. **Above all let us keep our hearts at peace** with that God in whose unveiled presence we may at any moment find ourselves,—with that Redeemer at whose judgment-bar the great account of life may be so speedily demanded. We are too prone to think of sudden death as if it were dropping into a frightful abyss. To the reconciled and prepared spirit, to the experienced and mature Christian, it is falling from the cradle of his infant being into everlasting arms of love beneath. But are we ready?

VIII. Let us not dismiss these contemplations without lifting our hearts in gratitude for that **hope of immortality which gilds the shadow of death** and lights the caverns of the grave. Do we mourn over virtuous friends, suddenly snatched from the large and cherished place which they filled in our affections? Glory be to Jesus, that we mourn not without hope! Our homes are made desolate; but the grave is desolate also. It imprisons not the beloved who have parted from us. We go thither to weep, and the angel of the resurrection meets us,—the voice steals over us,—"They are not here, they are risen." Death is swallowed up in victory. They die no more, but are as the angels of God. The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. A veil, indeed, must hang for a while between them and us.

They and we must, for a season, pursue separate paths of duty, in separate mansions of our Father's house,—yet not divided. It is still one house and one family. Yet our faith is weak. We think too much of the dark coffin and the lonely grave, with which the departed have far less connection than ourselves. But could we lift our thoughts to the abode of their glory, could we catch the hymn-note of their joy, could we get a momentary glimpse of their blissful state, it would arm us with fortitude to bear our loss, fill us with thankfulness for their unspeakable gain, and urge us ever onward and upward with unfaltering steps in the path which they trod before us. God grant to the deeply afflicted among us, that faith and patience may have their perfect work, that they may come forth as fine gold from the furnace, and may be found among those who through much tribulation have entered into the kingdom of God!

VICTORY OVER DEATH.

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHN.

Death is swallowed up in victory.—1 CORINTHIANS xv. 54.

IT is a hard thing to get the heart high enough to sing this song. Death is such a terrible living reality to us now. The sense that he is so near—ready to come in at any moment upon any one we may most dearly love—and that, if he

comes, he comes with a force which no power on earth can resist; the fact that he has so come in all his iron sternness; and then the long, long time that he holds his own; and the thought that we have, every one of us, to pass through it; and the horror of what may be in that untrodden passage—in the face of all these facts it is very difficult to call death victory.

While the battle is raging in the heat of the day, it is no easy thing to be calm enough, and to be confident enough to rehearse the evening song of triumph; and yet this is exactly what our duty is, to be standing out in faith upon the other side, and to be looking back upon death as a dead thing, and on the great conqueror of all, conquered and laid low!

No doubt St. Paul was helped to it by that being "in deaths oft" of which he spoke, and by his own moral daily dying. Our Easters come round to help us; and the more we can picture to ourselves the rising of the Lord Jesus, and the more we ourselves know the power of an inward death to sin, and a constant resurrection to newness of life, the better we shall be able to antedate the joy of that moment when, in the reunion of all we love, and waking up to the presence and the perfect image of God, we shall lift up our voices, and cry, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

I. The expression is a very strong one. You

will observe that it does not say, "Death shall be exchanged for victory," but the element of the death goes to make the substance of the victory; it is the absorption of the one which goes to form the very strength and being of the other. "Death is swallowed up in," or rather "into,"—"Death is swallowed up into victory."

And this is in strict accordance with God's general method. Spring must come out of winter; and there is no true happiness in the world till there has first been sadness. The sorrow is never taken away, but turned into joy. And so, in like manner, heaven would be a far less thing if we did not get to it by sorrow. The death is essential to the glory. "Death is drunk into," that is the exact meaning of the original word—"Death is drunk into victory."

It was clearly thus in the case of our Lord. The empty grave, the broken seal, the stone removed, the body free, the whole energies restored, showed plainly victory. But this was not all. It is evident that by some mysterious process, which we cannot trace, death turned to our Saviour's gain. He had greater liberty; the spirit more ruled the flesh; He was less subject to material laws; He was greater and more heavenly after His Resurrection. So that we may say that even to Christ it was a good thing to die; the grave helped His joys, and the "death was swallowed up into the victory."

And so it is with us.

II. **But let us understand accurately what that solemn word death means.** In whatever relation you take it, it always embodies one idea—separation. There is natural death; it is the separation of the body from the soul, and of both from those we love. There is moral death; it is the separation of the soul from God. There is eternal death; it is the separation of the creature forever from the light and the presence of its Creator. But in the wonderful method of God's grace, each of these deaths goes to make its own proper victory. The soul goes away for a while from the body, only that it may fit again the more perfectly, without the jar and the clashings which here so mar the union. The alienation from God, when death has once laid its hand upon us, turns to a friendship and an intimacy which unfallen man never knew. And the infinite distance which sin rolled in from all eternity between us and a holy God, only measures and enhances the covenant which has bridged the gulf to make the two worlds one.

And in each instance, the process by which the conquest was achieved was that in very deed, or by imputation, Christ Himself "drank death." Therefore it was that His spirit passed away from the tabernacle frame with that "loud cry." Therefore it was that He parted, not without bitter anguish, from those in whom His soul de-

lighted. Therefore it was He knew, through the power of the sin which He was carrying for us, what is the felt darkness of those far-off places where souls walk their dreary way, forsaken of God. And therefore it was that, with a literalness which we believe more than we can utter, "He went down into hell."

So Christ exhausted death. All death, of every kind, gathered itself into one; and it was poured into the cup, and Christ drained it to the dregs.

III. **If you can only believe, there is no death for you in the whole world.** In all its dark forms death is gone, gone as the darkness which melts into the morning light, gone as the early haze turns to the noon-tide heat, merged into life—such life as they know not who know not death, true life, the life which is the present life of the Lord Jesus, the life of the living ones in paradise, the only life worth the living, the life that springs from death.

Rise then, rise this Easter morning to the level of your high privileges! "With His own right hand, and with His holy arm, hath He gotten to Himself the victory!"

PIETY PRODUCES STRONG CONFIDENCE.

BY THE REV. JONATHAN EDMONDSON.

In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.—PROVERBS xiv. 26.

I. **The fear of the Lord affords strong confidence in poverty, sickness, persecution, temptation, and trial.**

II. **Religion gives strong confidence to the soul in the hour of death.**

That awful hour is at hand. When it arrives every earthly thing withdraws its aid; but piety remains, and affords the sweetest consolation. The Lord is present with His dying saints; holy angels are present; and Jesus stands ready to receive their departing spirits. They have fought the good fight; they have finished their course; they have kept the faith; and they are about to be crowned with glory. Their confidence is strong in the merit and mediation of Jesus, and in all the precious promises. They leave the world without reluctance, and rejoice in the prospect of eternal blessedness. The death of a good man is awful, but it is the hour of triumph. Nature struggles with pain; but the soul enjoys sweet peace. Death appears; but it has lost its sting. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 57).

The children of the Lord have a place of refuge.

The Lord is their stronghold (Neh. i. 7). He is their rock, their fortress, and deliverer (Ps. xviii. 2). Christ is a refuge for guilty souls when they repent and believe in His name (Heb. vi. 18). He is a covert to His people in the storm and tempest; and as the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah xxxii. 2). May we not infer that religion is a blessing of inestimable value? And that the enjoyment and practise of it is our highest wisdom, our greatest honor, and our best security? We have a refuge here; but our best refuge is in the heavenly world. There we shall be out of the reach of danger, and rest with God and the Lamb forever.

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

BY THE REV. W. G. BARRETT.

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.—LUKE xii. 40.

BEHOLD, here, another illustration of the teaching of Christ. Well to dwell on the characteristics of that teaching, that we may learn how to teach. Into His lips grace was poured. No subject of importance He did not explain; no duty He did not enforce; no error He did not expose; no danger he did not point out. Fully acquainted, not merely with the secrets of nature, but with the mysteries of the unseen world, He brought time and eternity, the visible and the in-

visible, the passing and the permanent, within the range of His teaching, and the knowledge of His disciples.

Possessing the keys of hell and of death—though in the guise of a common day-laborer—opening and shutting without resistance, he discovers the secrets of the prison-house of hell, and you see the lost "where their worm," etc. He carries you to the excellent glory, and you behold the nations of the redeemed, reclining on the bosom of eternal love, enjoying the kingdom prepared for them. And thus it is that our Lord himself dwells upon this subject, and appeals to the consciousness of immortality that dwells within us—to the lingering spark of Divine life that still flickers unextinguished amidst the almost total ruin of our nature.

"Be ye therefore ready," etc. In explanation of these words, we remark that they suggest two ideas:

I. **The dependence of man upon an unseen uncertainty.** Comparing it with the coming of the Son of man; both uncertain: no calculations can anticipate it; no preparations postpone it. Wonders of man's mind. No limits to the attainments of the human understanding. Found out the height of the heavens, and the distances of the stars; calculated the weight of the atmosphere in the most distant planets; and arranged invisible animalculæ, discoverable only by the microscope,

into their genera and species. We have dived into the depths of the ocean, and brought up the treasures of the deep; into the bowels of the earth, and ransacked the center of the globe, for the wealth of our cities; we have discovered the origin of almost every disease; and traced to its source every kind of contagion. We have found out, in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, remedies to all disorders, and palliation for all pain; but we have never been able to determine *when we shall die*. Few as our days are, we know not their limit; all the days of our appointed time must we wait, whether we will or not. The bounds of our habitation are fixed by heaven's immutable decree. Man, the *creature of a day*, must abide the coming of the Son of man. A tenant *at will,—a little child who is to abide* in a certain place till some one shall come for him, and then he must depart.

II. **The sovereign control of Christ.** The coming of the *Son* of *man*. Who is this that cometh and goeth, and openeth and shutteth, that allows one man to continue,—but commands another away;—that has the keys of the invisible world, girt about with a golden girdle? He says, "I am He that liveth, and was," etc. Oh, happy those who, as He comes, can say, "I know in whom," etc. Happy those who, as they see Him approaching, feel no fear, no crushing fear, no terrible heart shakings; but look on Him as one whom

they have long known, and long loved, and long desired to see; so that the love of Christ casts out the fear of death; and the certainty that rest and triumph are at hand, overcome the terrors of death, and the desolation of the grave; while they are enabled, through God's grace, and the love of the Spirit, to say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and will rejoice in His salvation."

> "His God sustains him in his dying hour,
> His final hour brings glory to his God."

Let us explain and enforce our Saviour's admonition. "Be ye therefore ready," etc.

Now, if there were nothing beyond the grave, such a command as this would be a presumptive falsehood, and a wretched mockery of the woes of man. Here is implied,

1. **The immortality of the soul.**

We do not attempt to prove the soul immortal; unless that is granted our faith is vain, and our preaching vain. No, we repeat, we want no proof that the soul is immortal, but we want something to make you feel it, until it weighs down in your spirits, and the purpose and magnitude of a human existence become the burden of your anxiety. Life and immortality have been brought to life by the Gospel: only as the teaching of this Book is received into the soul. will this truth be acknowl-

edged—our spiritual education commenced—our preparation for eternity undertaken.

Being ready, implies,

2. **A conviction of the fallen condition of our nature.** *Why are we urged to be ready?* Man once was always ready to meet his Maker. Man once stepped forth with thrilling joy to meet his Maker's eye, and hear his Maker's voice. Once, ere the harmony of creation was broken, the music of man's soul was a hymn of heaven's own creation. But when the hell-blast of sin came sweeping out of the bottomless pit, and passed over that Eden in which spirits of beauty and perfection kept their first love, and sung their first hymn; when the malignant breath of demons, infuriate against the perfect humanity, made but a little lower than the angels, passed over that scene, so fair, so bright, so pure, that angels saw in earth the counterpart of heaven, and heaven only the enlargement of earth—when the six days labor of a God was spoiled, and man's disobedience severed him from the true life of his soul,—he was no longer ready to meet his Creator.

Then we observe that to be ready,

3. **There must be a cordial acceptance of the redemptive truths of Christianity.** That Son of man whom we must meet—ready or unready—prepared or unprepared—is here, waiting to make each of us ready for His coming. Are we willing to accept of His preparation?

DEATH AVOIDED.

BY DAVID THOMAS, D. D.

"Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."—JOHN xi. 26.

NEVER die! What does this mean? Does it mean (1) *Freedom from corporeal death?* Nothing does the world dread so much as death, and nothing would it hail with greater exultation than a deliverance from it. Albeit, so long as mankind are sinful, a deliverance from corporeal mortality would be an evil rather than a good. Death serves to arrest the course of sin, and to prevent the world from becoming a pandemonium. Does it mean (2) *Freedom from annihilation?* We are in no danger of this; and this in itself is no boon:—non-existence is better than a miserable existence. What then does it mean? Generally it means this:—That nothing that gives value to life, nothing that makes life worth having, shall ever die if we truly believe in Christ.

I. **The healthy action of our spiritual powers will never cease.** What is life without activity? Worthless. And what is activity unless it be healthful? Misery. Faith in Christ secures the healthy action of all our spiritual faculties. The *perceptive*, *reflective*, *imaginative*, *recollective*, *anticipative*, will work harmoniously forever.

II. **Nothing valuable in our spiritual acquisitions will ever be lost.** What is life without ideas,

emotions, memories, habits? A blank. And what is it with these if they are not of a truly virtuous character? Despicable and wretched. But when these acquisitions are holy, life is blessed. Faith in Christ secures the permanency and perfection of all true ideas, affections, principles, habits, etc. "Our works do follow us." We cannot "labor in vain in the Lord."

EXTRACTS OF FUNERAL ADDRESS.

BY R. S. STORRS, D. D., LL. D.

IT is perhaps always true, when one stands at the point of the departure out of life on earth of a friend who has been known many years, that there comes a sudden and almost peremptory vision of the long course of acquaintance, and of frequent mutual converse, which has preceded. It is as when one rises to the summit of a crest on a long journey, from which he looks back at a glance over the miles which have been traversed, and notes again the chief objects of interest which have attracted attention on the way.

There are some lives which disappoint us, some impressions of character which we have to revise in later years, possibly even to reverse. The impressions which I formed of him at the first have continued unchanged to the very end of his life; and in these later years my acquaintance with him

has, of course, been even more close, personal, and familiar than it was in the earlier time.

I have known him in periods of tranquillity, of undisturbed progress in the missionary work with which he was so intimately connected, and I have known him in times of strenuous and vehement controversy; and always he has been the same.

He was a man of remarkably candid and clear intelligence. He was never hurried in his mental progress toward conclusions, but was always sufficiently rapid in it; and when his conclusion had been reached, it was decided, dispassionate, final. I do not think that I ever knew him, after he had fairly and largely considered a subject, to depart from the ground to which he had decisively come. Indeed, I should as soon have thought of seeing an oak-tree uproot itself from the soil in which it had been planted, and transport itself to some other locality, as to see our brother depart from a conclusion which he had carefully, deliberately, prayerfully reached. No urgency of external pressure could change his judgment; and unless his judgment and conviction were changed, there was nothing that could disturb the equipoise of his mind.

He was a man eminently fitted, by native faculty, by character, and by the habit of his life, for great administrative office. Such men are rare—as it seems to me, sometimes, rarer than they were. A man so vigilant, patient, cordial as

he was, such an intuitive judge of men, so profoundly responsive to the trends of public opinion and of social movement, as well as of Christian movement, he seemed predestined from the beginning to some high office in a great society. As pastor of a parish he was always highly honored and beloved by those to whom he ministered; and they who remain testify, to this day, to the affectionate reverence with which in childhood they met his benignant presence. But he was the ideal secretary of a great missionary society; by reason of his coolness, his equanimity, and his sympathy; his temperate judgment; his conservative tendency in matters of belief, associated with his genial interest in whatever was liberal in the movement of thought; by reason, too, of his readiness to undergo fatigue, to undertake long journeys—while always coming back to his office and his home with tender and renewed delight. He was one whom the churches confided in and honored in that great office. And therein, it seems to me, is eulogy enough for any man. It is much when a single congregation elects and rejoices in the service of one of us. It is more when a great society, an institution representing many churches, elects and rejoices in the man who performs high offices for it. It is a still nobler eulogy when *all* the churches, co-operating in a great and manifold work, so welcome and honor a man who continues their representative in it, and

by whom they are engaged to it more earnestly. And that has been *his* honor!

It is good to have known such men. It is good to have known them in our own youth, when impressions upon us were immediate and most vivid. It is good to have known them at a time and in circumstances when our knowledge of them could be more intimate than perhaps it could be amid the present conditions of life, in these days when the hurry of affairs crowds us into comparative isolation from each other and leaves scant time for converse and for friendship. It is good to have known them, to feel their influence upon us still.

And it is still better to look forward to meeting them again, and this our honored friend among them—to meeting them in the serene peace, and the open vision of the Heavenly Life, in the fulness of the new and glorified power, in the beauty and might of the immortal youth. How Montgomery's fine image comes back to us:

> "Thus star by star declines,
> Till all are passed away;
> As morning high and higher shines
> To pure and perfect day;
> Nor sink those stars in empty night:
> They hide themselves in heaven's own light."

God bring us all to that perfect light, to that city of the living, not of the dying, to the vision of God, and to the welcoming face of Christ!

THE PALE HORSE.

"And I looked, and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him."—REV. vi. 8.

IN this chapter we have a description of four horses with their respective riders. The first was white, on which sat an illustrious personage, with a bow, and he went forth from conquering to conquer. The second horse is red, to represent war. The third black, to represent famine: and then comes the fourth, a pale horse, whose rider is Death, and Hell followed him.

Let us consider,

I. **The figurative description here given of death.**

1. Death is under a seal (ver. 7).

"When he had opened the seal," etc. Death is not under the direction and power of Satan, but under the author, proprietor, and disposer of Life (Deut. xxxiii. 39; Dan. v. 25; Psal. ciii. 4).

2. Death is represented as riding.

Not as creeping, or walking, but riding forth with courage and power. Trampling as a war-horse all beneath his feet.

3. Death is described as a pale horse.

This may denote the general appearance of mortality. "Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away" (Job xiv. 20). How affecting the alterations of death upon the person of man! Abraham requested a burying-place, etc.

4. Death is described as being followed with Hell.

This word sometimes signifies the *grave*, and death throws its victims into the cold *loathsome* grave. It signifies sometimes the *invisible state*, and death hurries men into the dark unknown world. It also signifies the place of *future punishment*, and death consigns the wicked to the misery of the second death. "The rich man died," etc.

Notice,

II. **Our Duty respecting it.** "I heard the voice say, Come and see," etc.

1. Come and see the antiquity of death.

Go and look to the world's origin, and see how soon he commenced his career, etc. Behold Abel prostrate, etc.

2. Come and see the extent of devastations.

No country or color, or people, ever yet escaped his ravages. Wherever man is there death is also.

3 Come and see the spoiler foiled and conquered.

Jesus in our nature entered the field of combat; for a time death prevails; but at length, Christ arises with power, etc. His sting is withdrawn. The Saviour, standing on the neck of his foe, exclaims, "I am he that was dead," etc. "O death, I have been thy destruction," etc.

4. Come and see how death may safely be encountered.

Repentance—faith in Jesus, who hath abolished death—a title for heaven, by justifying grace—a new nature—and holiness of life, without which no man can see the Lord.

APPLICATION.

Let the subject be further impressed, by visiting the habitation of the dying.

1. Go to the death-bed of the **Infidel**, and see the anxiety, the dread, the despair, which surround it.

2. Go to the death-bed of the **Profligate**, hardened, stupefied, callous, dying like a beast.

3. Go to the death-bed of the **Worldling**,, his heart set upon wealth, clinging to the earth, as one exclaimed, "A kingdom for an hour!"

4. Go to the death-bed of the **Formalist**, ever near Christ, *but not* in Him. By the wayside, etc., still without. No oil, etc. Opportunities gone, etc. "The harvest is past," etc.

5. Go to the death-bed of the **Christian**. How bright and radiant is the scene! The very antechamber of heaven! "I am now ready to depart. O death," said one, "I do not fear thee," "O death, where is thy sting?" etc. And what do you feel respecting your own mortality? Is it not, "Let me die the death of the righteous," etc. Then now be made righteous, live righteously, and your last end shall be like his.

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE SAVED.

BY THE REV. J. T. BENDER.

"*After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*"—REV. vii. 9 : 10.

INTRODUCTION.

THOSE saved, before the coming of Christ, could be numbered as we learn from the context.

John had a wonderful vision; he saw the outcome of the old and new dispensations.

We must not construe the context in a literal way to mean only one hundred and forty-four thousand, but the fact taught that those saved before the coming of Christ could be counted.

I. **The company will be great**—"great multitude, no man can number."

1. Because one-third of our race die in infancy.

"I take these little lambs," said he,
"And lay them in my breast;
Protection they shall find in me,
In me be ever blest.
Death may the bands of life unloose,
But can't dissolve my love;
Millions of infant souls compose
The family above."

2. Because of the continued power of the Gos-

pel to save to the end of time. The day will come when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Isa. xi. 9. We are, perhaps, only in the twilight of that glorious day when all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest.

II. **In heaven, as on the earth, "God is no respecter of persons."**

1. "All nations," etc.

2. "Kindreds." We shall know our loved ones in glory.

III. **Their exalted position and condition.**

1. Christ had promised, "where I am, there ye may be also." John iii. 3.

2. Here is the fulfilment, "stood before the throne and the Lamb."

IV. **Their triumphant shout!**

1. "Not of works."

2. They gave all the praise to God and the Lamb for their cleansing, indicated by "white robes"; and their victory over sin, sorrow, sickness, death, and the grave, indicated by the expression, "palms in their hands."

Conclusion.

Was your departed loved one a true Christian? It was by the efficacy of His atoning blood and the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit that he was prepared to enter that august assembly. He

is now beyond the reach of sin and death. He is now with the pure and good of all who have gone. He is not dead; he lives in the highest sense.

Do you desire to meet him? Then trust in the Saviour of men. There is no other way.

THE CHRISTIAN'S DEATH AS SHOWN IN THE BIBLE.

BY THE REV. S. W. FELLOWS.

I must put off this my tabernacle.—2 PETER i. 14.
The time of my departure.—2 TIM. iv. 6.
After my decease.—2 PETER i. 15.
I go away.—JOHN xvi. 7.
I will receive you.—JOHN xiv. 3.
An entrance . . . abundantly.—2 PETER i. 11.

I. Death in Scripture a comparatively unimportant event.

1. Not made prominent.

No mention of the death of Peter, Paul, or John, only of James, etc.

2. Great themes of the Bible.

(*a*) Life—its duties, responsibilities, destiny.

(*b*) Eternity—its rewards and penalties.

(*c*) The atonement—How to escape sin.

II. Death—Put off this my tabernacle.

1. A disrobing—as of garments to rest.

(*a*) Of the old body, infirmities, suffering, pain.

2. A cottage to a mansion.

Out of the old into the new.

III. **After my decease—my exodus.**—"The time of my departure is at hand."

ILLUSTRATION.

1. Exodus of Israelites—Egypt to Canaan.

(*a*) Egypt of bondage, slavery, hard task-masters.

(*b*) Canaan of liberty, land rich, fertile, etc.

IV. **Heavenly view of Christian's death.**

1. An abundant entrance! 2 Peter i. 11.

2. A glorious reception. John xiv. 3.

V. **Death does not affect the soul.**

1. Disrobing, departure, reception.

Only affect the outer part—the body.

2. The soul lives on, still thinks, feels, loves.

No intimation of unconscious sleep.

3. Character—is in the soul.

Death stereotypes character.

He that is holy, let him be holy still, etc.

VI. **Death an exaltation.**

1. Old to the new.

2. Temporal to the eternal.

ILLUSTRATION.

A traveling man, called to the home-office.

A soldier detailed to be body-guard of the General.

EXTRACT FROM TRIBUTE TO A DEVOUT CHRISTIAN.

BY BISHOP C. C. McCABE, D.D.

WE see her rocking the cradle and doing the home work, leading the ladies' prayer meeting, helping in the revival services, standing by her husband in every conflict, calm, patient, loving, trustful, heroic. We can look and look, through the mists of half a century of toil, and allow our imaginations to call up the scenes that must have transpired, the battles which we know were fought, and the victories which we know were won, until her life becomes fairly sublime. How many other lives have felt the tranforming touch of this one! How many broken hearts she has comforted! How many despairing ones her gentle voice—now hushed in death—has called back to purity and home and heaven!

We can think of her as the young minister's wife, full of happiness, content with her lot, unacquainted with sorrow, but called upon, because she was the minister's wife, to comfort the bereaved. We who have known her in her graceful, cheerful, beautiful old age can well imagine the inimitable delicacy and tenderness with which she pressed the cup of divine consolation to lips quivering with anguish, and after she herself had

been called upon to mourn the loss of a child she received the last supreme qualification to be a consoler to stricken mothers.

When Abraham Lincoln stood at his mother's grave he said: "All that I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother." Almost every man who towers up among his fellows like Saul among his brethren, who is distinguished for splendid service to his church or to his country, owes the inspiration that shaped his life to the prayerful solicitude and careful training of his mother. And if the children of this departed mother could be gathered here—the two who are living and the five from the shining courts above—and could stand about her coffin to-day, they would say the same of her who lies sleeping there: "All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

She herself would not approve of extravagant eulogy, but it is difficult to find language to measure the infinite value to a human life of a consecrated motherhood. Her sons and daughters have been trying through all her twenty-four years of widowhood to pay back in kind the love and devotion and tender care which they received from her when they were children. But when she died, a few hours ago, they were far in arrears. It is a debt of such immense proportion that it never can be paid. A mother's love, more perfectly than any other human love, resembles

that divine love which found its expression upon Calvary.

What about this body that lies here in the coffin? What does our faith say concerning that? Will the spirit and the body ever meet again? Let us stand here, and with the Church of all ages say: "I believe in the resurrection of the dead." A soul and a body have parted here which lived together in mystic union for ninety-four years. It has been said that poets come nearer the truth than other thinkers. Mrs. Sigourney, among her many beautiful writings, has given us a poem which seems to me strangely appropriate to-day. It is entitled "Farewell of the Soul to the Body." Just at the moment of departure the soul speaks to the body and says:

"Companion dear! the hour draws nigh;
The sentence speeds—To die, to die.
So long in mystic union held,
So close with strong embrace compelled,
How canst thou bear the dread decree,
That strikes thy clasping nerves from me?

"To Him who on this mortal shore
The same encircling vestment wore.
To Him I look, to Him I bend,
To Him thy shuddering frame commend.

"If I have ever caused thee pain,
The throbbing brow, the burning brain,
With cares and vigils turned thee pale,
Or scorned thee when thy strength did fail,

Forgive! Forgive! thy task doth cease,
Friend, Lover, let us part in peace.

"If thou didst sometimes check my force,
Or trifling stay mine upward course,
Or lure from Heaven my wavering trust,
Or bow my drooping wing to dust,
I blame thee not, the strife is done;
I knew thou wert the weaker one,
The vase of earth, the trembling clod,
Constrained to hold the breath of God.
Well hast thou in my service wrought,
Thy brow hast mirrored forth my thought;
To wear my smile thy lip hast glowed,
Thy tear, to speak my sorrows, flowed.
Thine ear hath borne me rich supplies
Of sweetly varied melodies;

"Thy hands my prompted deeds have done;
Thy feet upon mine errands run.
Yes, thou hast marked my biddings well;
Faithful and true! farewell! farewell!
Go to thy rest. A quiet bed
Meek mother earth with flowers shall spread,
Where I no more thy sleep shall break,
With fevered dream, or rudely wake
Thy wearied eye. O quit thy hold!
For thou art faint and chill and cold,
And long thy grasp and groan of pain
Have bound me in thy pitying chain,
Though angels urge me hence to soar,
Where I shall share thine ills no more.

"Yet we shall meet. To soothe thy pain,
Remember, we shall meet again.
Quell with this hope the victor's sting,
And wear it as thy signet ring.
When the dire worm shall pierce thy breast
And naught but ashes mark thy rest,

When stars shall fall and skies grow dark,
And proud suns quench their glowworm spark,
Keep thou that hope, to light thy gloom,
Till the last trumpet rends the tomb.
Then shalt thou glorious rise and fair,
Nor spot, nor stain, nor wrinkle bear,
And I, with hovering wing elate,
The bursting of thy bonds shall wait,
And breathe the welcome of the sky—
No more to part—no more to die,
Co-heirs of Immortality."

But far better are the words of Paul: "Sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; * * * sown in weakness, it is raised in power: * * * sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." And better than all are the words of Jesus Christ Himself: "I am the resurrection and the life."

THE FUTURE STATE.

BY REV. A. B. WILSON.

REV. xxi. 4.

DEATH suggests questions about the world beyond. The Old Testament gives vague and unsatisfactory answers. The New Testament is more satisfactory. Paul gives a brief description of the celestial body and some of the conditions of the heavenly world. John, in the Revelation, presents some pictures of the heavenly place. From scriptural teaching we learn several characteristics of the future state.

I. **Freedom from pain.** We are acquainted with pain brought on by sickness and other incidents of our physical and social relations. We hunger and thirst on account of the want of worldly possessions and the loss of friends. In Revelation vii. 16, it is said: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more."

II. **Exemption from death.** Here we are in the world of the dying. Our loved ones are snatched away and in regard to our own life we know not what a day may bring forth. In the future state "there shall be no more death." The everlasting life given to believers through Christ cannot be broken by any power. The river and tree of life will afford a never-ending sustenance.

III. **Congenial society.** The average human being craves companionship. There must be common interests and similar dispositions to afford complete fellowship. It is imperfect here. In the future state we shall enjoy the society of the redeemed people of earth, the angels of light, and the Great God and Redeemer. Having been cleansed from earthly impurity we shall be like the other inhabitants of heaven, and, therefore, in harmony with our surroundings.

IV. **Perfect knowledge.** Here we are annoyed because we know only in part and see through a glass darkly. In the future world we shall know as we are known and enjoy the blessings of knowledge that is free from earthly limitations.

EXTRACT FROM EULOGISM UPON A CHIEF JUSTICE.

BY SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD, LL. D.

BUT, fellow-citizens, his high elevation, his pure joy, his bright earthly honor, was, *in home*. It was there—that the soundness of his judgment, the wisdom of his counsel, the mildness of his temper, the firmness of his purposes, the affectionate tone of his manners, the unequaled tenderness of his heart, the dignity and elevation of his virtues, appeared in all their loveliness, and all their strength. And they only can truly estimate his worth, who saw and knew him *there*. There—in that birthplace of every pure affection; that soil in which the best and noblest virtues spring, and grow, and blossom, and bear the richest fruits for time and for eternity—There, he was eminently great, and good, and wise—There, too, "he loved to love"; and the only pang he ever caused, was when he ceased to love. There—but I will not disfigure the portrait, by a trembling and feeble pencil.

My fellow-citizens, the life and character which have engaged our attention, are such as the heart delights to contemplate. They form a consistent whole, with no irregularity of proportion. They do not exhibit the overwhelming splendor which bewilders the unsettled vision; but the loveliness which attracts and fixes the constant gaze. The

powers of mind which guided and formed them, were not of the magnificent kind which sweep the stars and penetrate the ocean; which confound with the roar of the cataract, or startle with the lurid glare of the meteor; but strong, steady, calm and persevering; constantly producing the warmth which nourishes, and the streams which fertilize. His best and truest eulogy is, that he had a vigorous intellect, sustained by lofty purposes, and based upon an honest and feeling heart. Such, it was his high ambition to be—and such, he was. Such, does the State of which he was a native, regard him: and he will continue to be admired as one of the richest portions of the Corinthian capital of her fame. The universal distress of her citizens; the excited sympathies and profound emotion of this assembled multitude of the learned, the patriotic, the wise, and the benevolent, of every rank and sect, form a precious tribute to his worth, and give assurance that he did not live in vain; and that his name and actions will continue to be had in remembrance. His memory will be cherished, by all his fellow-citizens, with enduring affection; by the Court and the Bar, with sincere reverence; by his personal associates, with emotions strong as a brother's love; and in the domestic circle, it can be forgotten, only, when memory itself shall perish.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

BY THE REV. JOHN HOWE.

As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.—PSA. xvii. 15.

THREE things offer themselves to view: the subject, nature, and season of this blessedness. Consider the nature of this blessedness.

I. **The vision of the face of God.**

1. The object of this vision: "Thy face."

(*a*) A sensible glory: such a glory was seen by Moses at Sinai, afterwards in the tabernacle, and at the transfiguration.

(*b*) An intellectual glory: Glory is resplendent excellency, real worth made conspicuous. This glory is the conspicuous luster of Divine perfections.

2. The act of beholding glory has a peculiar respect to the power of seeing. Sight is the most perfect sense; noble, comprehensive, quick, and sprightly. The act of the mind is called seeing. The blessed shall have the glory of God so presented as "to know as they are known."

II. **The Soul's participation of his likeness.** How strange an errand hath the Gospel in the world, to transform men and make them like God.

1. There is a sense in which we cannot be like God. God will endure no such imitation of

Him as to be rivaled in the point of His Godhead (Ezek. xxviii. 6–10.)

2. There is a just and laudable imitation of God: we are to be imitators of God (Eph. v. 1).

3. Man has already a likeness to God: the material world represents Him, as a house the builder; spiritual beings as a child the father: others carry his footsteps, these his image.

4. There is a natural image of God in the soul of man, inseparable from it, its spiritual immortal nature, its intellectual and elective powers are the image of the same powers of God. There is also a moral likeness, wisdom, mercy, truth, righteousness, holiness.

5. Assimilation to God in moral perfections conduces to the soul's satisfaction and blessedness: "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." How great a hope is this! Were the dust of the earth turned into stars in the firmament, what could equal the greatness and wonder of this mighty change.

III. **The resulting satisfaction.** The soul's rest in God, its perfect enjoyment of the most perfect good, the perfecting of its desires in delight or joy. Desire is love in motion; delight, love in rest. It is a rational, voluntary, pleasant, active rest: action about the end shall be perpetuated, though action towards it ceases. It is the rest of hope perfected in fruition.

THE BRIGHT SIDE OF DEATH.

BY REV. R. ROCK.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.
—NUM. xxiii. 10.

THERE is a holy covetousness, and these words point to an illustrious example. We may covet love, sympathy, wisdom, holiness, usefulness, to die like the righteous, and entrance into heaven itself.

Most persons look upon death as a dark and gloomy thing without one redeeming quality. But the death of the righteous, like the lowering clouds that shut out the sun at noonday, has a bright side and a silver lining also.

I. **Dying is not so painful as is commonly supposed.** True to our natural instincts we shrink back from death.

With the Christian, as with Pascal, it is only the supposed pain of dying he fears. But the highest authority now declares that there is necessarily no pain in dying itself.

II. **Many deaths are bright in comparison.**

(*a*) The death of the righteous with that of the wicked. So thought Balaam. With the wicked, death is a final adieu to all Gospel opportunities and holy companionships, and a plunge over the precipice of woe into the abysses of a starless night. With the Christian it is moving out into eternal daylight.

(*b*) The death of the righteous with other sad facts and dark events. Greater misfortunes than death can befall the Christian.

III. **Death is not a forfeiture of conscious being.** Our intelligent and spiritual parts are essentially imperishable. Death does not destroy the inhabitant. It only takes down the house in which he lives. The faithful believer never dies. (John xi. 26).

IV. **There will be a resurrection of the body.** The grave is only an inn. Man was created all immortal and he shall rise from the grave and live forever. Death shall be destroyed. "This mortal must put on immortality."

V. **Death is the royal highway to betterment of the Christian's estate.** "It is the gateway of life, the vestibule of heaven." It is going from all earthly good to the best in our Father's house.

(*a*) It is the soul's emancipation from all bondage and limitations that mar its larger pleasure and deter its expansion and unfolding. It is like the worm that bursts its chrysalis and comes forth a thing of larger life, liberty, and beauty.

(*b*) It secures to the believer an immediate increase of all that is good in itself. It is going from large opportunities to larger ones. He is like one who moves from the poorhouse into king's palaces and from plain fare to everlasting banquetings. It is departure from friends "to an innumerable company of angels," etc. Death is his last conflict

for his crown. Amidst the shadows of the valley he shouts with Edward Payson, "The battle is fought and the victory is won."

(*c*) It is recovery of and everlasting reunion with departed loved ones.

"Oh how sweet it will be, etc."

* * * *

"We shall meet we, shall sing, we shall reign, etc."

RELIEVING THOUGHTS CONCERNING DEATH.

"*I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.*"—JOB XXX. 23.

THE text suggests some thoughts of Job concerning his own death. Every man must die, and every man may feel concerning his own death three things that have a tendency to make the soul calm, and even brave in the prospect:

I. There will be nothing **unnatural** in my death. It is "appointed" as the death of every other kind of organized life on earth; it is the natural law of all organized bodies, to wear out, decay, dissolve. As the earth takes back to itself all the elements that have entered into the composition of vegetables and animals, why should I refuse or dread the demand? I may rest assured that kind nature will make a benign and beneficent use of all the elements that have entered into my

corporal existence. Let me be ready to yield them up unreluctantly, ungrudgingly, thanking the Infinite for their use.

1. It is *dishonest* for me to object to this; for my body was only borrowed property, a temporary loan, nothing more.

2. It is *ungrateful* for me to object to this. Though I never had a claim to such a boon, it has been of great service to my spiritual nature.

3. It is *unphilosophic* for me to object to this. Whatever my objections and resistance, it must come.

II. There will be nothing **uncommon** in my death. "The house appointed for all living." Were I one of a few, amongst the millions of the race, singled out for such a destiny, I might complain; but since all, without any exception, must die, who am I that I should complain? Since Abraham and all the patriarchs, Isaiah and all the prophets, Paul and all the apostles, Luther and all the reformers, Milton and all the poets, Xavier and all the missionaries, up to the present period, have gone, why should I feel a moment's reluctance to join them in the mighty house? The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?

III. There will be nothing **accidental** in my death. "I know that Thou wilt bring me to death." I shall not die because of any fortuitous incident, or because of any fatalistic force, but

because my Father brings me to the grave. "Thou turnest man to dust, Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away." There are no accidental deaths, no premature graves. The eternal, all-loving Father brings us to death.

THE BLESSED DEAD.*

BY THE REV. HENRY B. WARRING.

"*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*"—REV. xiv. 13.

IN every other particular of present existence, men's fortunes differ, but to die is common to all. The stream of life, whether it runs darkly or brightly, languidly or smoothly, is at last stopped by death. Other experiences may be escaped by various pleas, but there is no escape from the darkness of death that is coming upon all. It is inevitable, universal, reasonable.

The text states a condition, describes a character, assigns a reason.

I. **The condition.** "Blessed," *i. e.*, happy, satisfied, at peace, utmost capacity for happiness gratified. The Christian teaching, that death means more abundant life, sounds like a paradox. But if it be this, it is not peculiar to Christian faith. Everywhere life is conditioned by death. Every

* The author of this sketch received the prize offered by the publisher of *The Preachers' Magazine* for the best funeral outline.

advance in life necessitates death. Nothing lives save as it extracts nourishment from air or water or earth, or from vegetable and animal tissues by a process which involves the decomposition of that on which it feeds.

II. **The character described.** "Which die" in the Lord. The blessedness announced is the result of character and conduct, the character developed and made manifest by the conduct during life. They who cannot think cheerfully of death have probably never thought cheerfully and rationally of life. Those to whom death is a mysterious, and therefore, repugnant image, to such, life itself can be but a confused riddle, for they cannot as yet have any clear conception of the purpose of their existence. Life's great end is to make us like, and pleasing to, Christ. If life does this for us, we get the best out of it, and our life is completed, whatever be the number of our days. Such a life is the only adequate preparation for a holy death, since the readiness for death is that of character, not of occupation.

III. **The reason assigned.** "That they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

1. Blessed in themselves, being at rest. The weariness of physical labor, the depressing reactions of intellectual pursuits, the strain of spiritual conflict—all things of the past.

2. Blessed in their recompense. "Their works do follow them." While the price of their purchase and their title to Heaven absolutely and entirely involve, and depend upon, the blood of Christ, their works follow as the satisfactory evidence of having lived to, and died in, the Lord.

3. Blessed in their influence upon the living. While all their personal labor ends with life, the influence of that life tarries with the living, so that, while dead, they still live. Observation and experience demonstrate that, long after they have passed away, the results of the life of the holy dead follow them. Continuing, lasting power for good is the legacy to the world of all who "die in the Lord."

THE CHRISTIAN LABORER ASLEEP.

BY C. D. TRUMBULL, D. D.

"*David, after he had served his generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.*"—ACTS xiii. 36.

DAVID was a faithful worker, but his days were numbered. The time came when his labors were ended and God called him to his rest and his reward.

As with David so with all true Christians; their lives are spent in service, at length they fall asleep. Meditating on our theme we remark.

I. **It is God's will that the laborer shall sleep.**

Our text teaches that he serves "by the will of God," it is equally true that "by the will of God" he sleeps. His work is appointed; when it is done God will cause him to lie down in the grave, which He has hallowed as a bed of rest for all His faithful servants. He will issue His mandate, then "the dust shall return to the earth as it was" (Eccl xii. 7.)

II. **Sleeping he rests from toils and conflicts and sufferings.** Laid in the cemetery he is discharged from earthly service. He has run his race, has reached the goal, has received the crown. He has fought his battles, vanquished his foes, and now exults in victory. He has crossed life's ocean, experienced its storms and fogs, and now has entered the haven of everlasting rest.

III. **He sleeps in Jesus.** United to Christ in life his dust is in union with Him in the grave. His sleep is sweet; sweeter than that of the babe pillowed on its mother's bosom, than that of the laborer when his day's work is done.

IV. **He sleeps and yet has life.** The body may sleep and yet the mental and spiritual faculties be active. So in the case before us. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been long asleep, yet Jesus taught they were living (Matt. xxii. 32). Moses fell asleep more than fourteen hundred years before the Christian era, yet he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration and talked with Jesus.

V. **He shall yet awake out of sleep.** The night shall terminate, the morning dawn. The Master will call him at the set time, then he shall rise reinvigorated, refreshed, ready for new service. He shall awake never to sleep again.

CONCLUSION.

1. *Let tired laborers be encouraged.* There is a time of rest.

2. *Let mourners be comforted.* Your loved ones, who served the Saviour, are only sleeping. They shall awake to newness of life.

THE BREVITY OF HUMAN LIFE.

BY THE REV. JONATHAN EDMONDSON.

The days of our years are threescore years and ten: And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.—PSALM XC. 10.

I. **The period of human life is short.**

PASSING over the thousands and millions who die in infancy, in youth, and in the bloom of life, we may say of all who attain the full age of man, that their life is "a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James iv. 14). It may fitly be compared to a post, a shadow, a flower, a flood, a dream, and a tale that is told.

Our life appears short, when compared with

the lives of the *antediluvians*. They lived many hundreds of years. The period of human life appears shorter still, when compared with the duration of the *world*. It is near six thousand years since the world was created. What a vast number of generations have passed away since then!

When compared with *eternity*, our lives dwindle to a point. Those who entered upon eternity several thousand years ago are but now upon the borders of an endless duration; and when thousands and millions of ages are gone, they will be exactly in the same situation. What a great subject for the little mind of man to contemplate! Endless duration confounds our thought. What, then, is mortal life? What are threescore years and ten? How soon are they gone! They are lost in this vast comparison.

II. **If we exceed that period, it is labor and sorrow.** Most men desire old age; but few reflect upon the labor and sorrow of the aged. Let us venture to look at this gloomy subject: Perhaps it may check our youthful vanity, and lead us to a serious, sober conduct.

The aged have lost the **vigor and strength** of youth; and now **the grasshopper is a burden.** The intellects and senses of the aged are decayed; so that they neither understand nor relish life as they formerly did. The idea of out-living our dearest friends, so as to become solitary in

the midst of society, is very distressing; and it would be almost insupportable to the aged, if they were susceptible of those fine feelings of friendship, which they felt in former years. Blunted as these feelings are, this, no doubt, is a source of considerable sorrow.

Their prospects in the world are nearly closed. We may add, that too many, at this awful period, **are totally unprepared for a better world.** Blessed be God, there are a few whose situation is quite the reverse. Their sins are pardoned; their souls are cleansed; they sweetly resign themselves to the will of God, and look forward, with pleasing hope, to a better life.

Most men complain of the shortness of life; but few improve it as it flies. Short as it is, it is long enough for every necessary purpose. Good men should rejoice that it is no longer. Heaven is their home, and they will soon be there. If wicked men were to live longer, they might do more mischief, increase their guilt, and add to the punishments which await them in a future state. Come, then, let us be up and doing. Time is of infinite value. Let us improve every moment as it flies. While others indulge anxious desires to live *long*, let it be our principal care to live *well;* and then we shall be happy beyond the grave. God grant it to us all for Christ's sake! *Amen.*

DIVINE MERCY IN HUMAN AFFLICTION.

"*For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.*—LAMENTATIONS iii. 31, 32.

THIS is the testimony of the experience of a man in great affliction. Jerusalem was now overthrown, the Temple burnt, the throne of David now in the dust, the yoke of oppression on the necks of the Jewish people, and the seal of Heaven on their calamities. Albeit the prophet says, "He doth not afflict willingly." Thus, like Milton in his blindness, he asserts Divine Providence, and justifies the ways of God to man. The subject is Divine mercy in human affliction This is seen

I. In the **reluctance with which the affliction proceeds from God.** All afflictions may be said to come from Him, inasmuch as they are the penalties of His laws and take effect by His permission. He foresees all human suffering, and could prevent it. Hence, though He does not directly inflict suffering, suffering in this sense may be traced to Him. He causeth grief; He afflicts; but this suffering is not according to His will, "He doth not afflict willingly." Suffering is repugnant to His benevolent nature, why then does He allow it to come? First: Because it is according to the benevolent laws of the universe. Love has linked indissolubly suffering and sin together.

The greatest calamity that could happen to the universe would be a dissolution of this connection. Secondly: Because sufferings have a disciplinary influence. They tend to quicken spiritual thought, loosen interest in the material, and throw the soul back upon itself, the spiritual and the everlasting. True, it does not always discipline, but it always should and always does in those who are the children of God. "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment," etc. This is seen.

II. in **the loving-kindness with which affliction are ever attended.** "Yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies." Divine mercy is always seen in sufferings. It is seen, First: In the slightness of the suffering compared both with the deserts and the enjoyments. How much misery does the sinner deserve? Let his own conscience answer. How little are his sufferings, compared with this! How much happiness does he enjoy every day! What are his pains, compared with the bulk of his enjoyments? It is seen, Secondly: In the alleviations and sustaining ministries afforded under suffering. How much to alleviate suffering has the greatest sufferer, how many relieving ministries at hand—loving friends, medical science, etc., etc.

A CORRECT ESTIMATE OF HUMAN LIFE.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.—PSALM XC. 12.

OF all the blessings which the adorable Author of our being has conferred upon man, there are few more important than that inestimable boon which we denominate *time;* because it is that on the continuance of which infinite wisdom has rendered every other good in some measure dependent. Yet, alas! notwithstanding the vast importance of our fleeting moments, how few are there who attach to them a proper estimate, and improve them according to their value. This lamentable abuse of time appears to have been commensurate with the existence of moral depravity, for the apostle Paul, in two of his epistles, reminds the churches of the importance of "redeeming the time" (Eph. v. 16; Col. iv. 5). And the devout author of the psalm before us, evidently conscious of the proneness of man to neglect and abuse time, raises his pious ejaculation to heaven, and prays, "*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*" As the same disposition in the human heart is still in operation, let us endeavor to counteract its influence by considering

I. **The means of ascertaining a correct estimate of human life.** The pious psalmist was deeply

sensible of his dependence upon God, and hence he "gave himself unto prayer." Prayer was the means which he used; and this powerful instrument is universally necessary, and universally applicable. This will appear if we proceed to notice:

1. *The natural indisposition of man to improve the fleeting moments of life.* This humbling and lamentable truth forces itself upon us, supported by all that weight of evidence which personal experience and daily observation regularly furnish. Multitudes of our unhappy fellow-creatures are devoting their passing hours to purposes decidedly hostile to those for which time was originally designed; whilst others, in some degree persuaded of the vast importance of time, are nevertheless deferring its proper occupation and use to some uncertain future period; and thus year after year steals into eternity unimproved, charged with an awful report to the throne of the final judge (Luke xii. 16–20; Acts xxiv. 25). Even the Christian, acting in some measure under the influence of that estimate of life which the volume of inspiration furnishes, has reason to mourn over many blanks and vacancies which occur on the pages of his history. Hence, all have need to pray, "So teach us to number our days," etc.

2. *The sovereignty of Jehovah over the human heart.* That omnipotent Being who is the sole object of prayer, has the entire control of man; for He reigneth in the armies above, and on the

earth beneath. He can instruct the most ignorant mind; subdue the most turbulent passions; and conquer the most obdurate heart. By a thousand means, unknown to erring man, He can effectually impress a true estimate of time upon the human mind. The boisterous winds—the tumultuous ocean—and the hearts of the children of men, are equally subject to His almighty dominion (1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12, 17–19).

3. *The direct appointment of infinite wisdom.* "The Father of lights," from whom proceedeth "every good gift," has in His infinitude of wisdom appointed and sanctioned prayer as the medium between heaven and earth; and whatever blessings we may need at the hands of our beneficent Creator, we are taught to expect them only through the lively exercise of fervent prayer. This momentous truth is supported by the testimony of the sacred Scriptures, and by the experience of the truly pious in every age of the church (Ezek. xxxvi. 37; Matt. vii. 7, 8; James i. 5, 6; iv. 2, 3).

4. *The tried efficacy of prayer.* If prayer were an untried experiment, then we might entertain some doubts respecting its influence, and should have a plausible reason for hesitancy in resorting to it; but doubt is precluded, and hesitation superseded by that overpowering strength of evidence with which the efficacy of prayer is supported. Myriads of witnesses of its power encircle the

throne of Jehovah in the regions of immortality; and myriads more, still on earth, are daily feasting on the bounty of their God, through this admirable medium of Divine intercourse. But we need not ascend up to heaven for evidence in support of this truth; nor need we wander to distant parts of the earth to collect convincing proofs; our researches need not exceed the limits of the present congregation; here doubtless we have many witnesses that

> "Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream
> Of glory on the consecrated hour
> Of man in audience with the Deity."

(Exod. xxxiii. 18–23; xxxiv. 5–7; James v. 16–18).

II. **The particulars of which a correct estimate of human life consists.** The particulars of which this estimate consists. By "numbering our days" we are not to understand the Psalmist to mean that it is the duty of man to ascertain the period of his mortal existence; this is one of those "secret things which (exclusively) belong to the Lord." That estimate of human life referred to in our text doubtless includes a correct idea of its importance, together with a conscientious improvement of its parts. In thus "numbering our days," it will be necessary to consider,

1. *The smallness of their number.* The life of man is circumscribed in its limit; and though we

may mark its progress by certain periods, and thus divide it into small portions, yet, generally, threescore years and ten will terminate our mortal story, and consign the most athletic to the "house appointed for all living." This is a very narrow limit, compared with its antediluvian extent, and with the important work which ought to be effected, viz., the gloom of ignorance dispelled—the oppressive load of guilt removed—and the deep-fixed stain of moral pollution washed away (Ps. xxxix. 5; James iv. 14).

2. *The rapidity of their flight.* Human life is not only limited in its duration, but also fleeting in its progress. The several portions of which it is composed steal away in rapid succession; and all the boasted power and wisdom of man are insufficient either to impede their progress, or to recall them when they have passed away. The Holy Ghost has made choice of the most fleeting objects in nature, in order to impress the human mind with a correct idea of the rapid course of time, and excite the sons of Adam to the proper occupation and improvement of their fleeting moments (Job vii. 6; ix. 25; Ps. xc. 10).

3. *The uncertainty of their continuance.* Although man is capable of understanding an extensive variety of interesting subjects, yet the termination of his mortal existence is a point which he can never expect to ascertain. This solemn period infinite wisdom has concealed from the most pry-

ing curiosity. This is one of those prerogatives which Jehovah has exclusively reserved to Himself. The moldering moss-grown annals of the dead in our graveyards, together with the daily occurrence of human mortality, sufficiently establish this humbling truth (Job xxi. 21, 23–25; Luke xii. 19, 20).

4. *Their influence on our eternal destiny.* The present state of man is probationary in its nature, and decisive in its influence upon his eternal condition. It is in time that the character is formed for eternity. Earth alone is the scene of operation for that mercy which is exercised through the amazing provisions of the Gospel of Christ, and which is of essential importance as a preparation for participating in the felicities of the heavenly world. The unhappy being who, "driven away in his wickedness," quits the stage of life without this Gospel meetness for the skies, has

> "No patron! intercessor none! Now past
> The sweet, the clement, mediatorial hour!
> For guilt no plea! to pain no pause! no bound!
> Inexorable all! and all extreme!"

(Dan. xii. 2, 3; Matt. xxv. 31–46; 2 Thess. i. 7–10).

III. **The important effect which a correct estimate of human life tends to produce.**—"That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." "Wisdom" is a term very frequently used, and variously applied in the sacred Scriptures; viz., to

mechanical genius (Exod. xxxi. 2, 3); general literature (Acts vii. 22);—natural instinct (Job xxix. 17),—that prudence which enables a man to discern what is proper to be done (Eccles. x. 10);—and to true religion (Psalm cxi. 10; James iii. 17). To the last two ideas or senses alone our text seems to direct our attention. 1. The term "wisdom" sometimes describes that prudence which enables a man to discern and perform those actions which accord with the fitness of things. If the days of man be so few, so fleeting, so uncertain, and so momentous, it certainly is highly proper to seize the passing moments as they fly, and conscientiously devote them to those purposes which will produce the greatest possible benefit; preserving them with a miser's care from being associated with unprofitable, unnecessary, and (much less with) ungodly actions. It is the distinguished prerogative of man,

> ——"To raise
> A royal tribute from the poorest hours;
> Immense revenue every moment pays."

Much time may be saved by guarding against unnecessary sleep—useless commixion with ungodly men—unprofitable reading—and, in short, every exercise and pursuit which cannot be engaged in to the "glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31).—The advice of an eminent divine of the last century on this point, is worthy of being engraven upon our

hearts: "Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time." 2. "Wisdom" is sometimes applied to true religion. The application of the heart to this, is the great end of life; and no man has his heart properly influenced with the shortness, uncertainty, and importance of time, who does not make this the grand business of his life. It is very possible to apply the *head* without having the *heart* influenced. The man, who under the influence of a proper estimate of time, is the subject of this important application, has experienced a general renovation of his moral nature; he is "renewed in the spirit of his mind;" he experiences a lively union with God through faith in Jesus Christ; and he is solicitous to "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, and be filled with all the fulness of God." Influenced by a spiritual principle, he is the subject of a spiritual enjoyment, and gives proof of the whole by holiness of practice (Gal. v. 22–25).

This subject tends,

1. To detach our affections from earthly objects.

2. To excite us to diligence in our Christian calling.

3. To alarm the trifler, and awaken in him a lively sensibility of his awful condition.

A PORTION OF AN ADDRESS AT THE FUNERAL OF AN ARTIST.

BY REV. JOHN HALL, D. D., LL. D.

AS in nature no object is without use or beauty to the keen eye of intelligence, or the calm and quiet eye of taste, so no life is without its lessons of warning or encouragement. The unselfishness, the generosity, the quiet, unconscious power, the purity of thought and speech and life of John F. Kensett attracted you to him, and won for him, without design or effort on his part, a high place in your hearts. There the best memorials are stored, and the noblest monument to any man is that which is built up day by day, patiently, in the after life of those who loved him, and who try to reproduce in themselves what they loved in him. I suppose the artist often carries in his mind memories of beauty or of grandeur, which he has not yet the opportunity to fix on the canvas in form and color, which, perhaps, he but imperfectly fixes after all; yet still striving to realize his ideal, and be bettered by the effort. So should it be with us when we lose those whom we love. Let us carry within us the tranquil recollections of what they were; let us try to perpetuate in ourselves what made them worthy of esteem and confidence. Then, my brethren, will you best commemorate the good spirit, the elevated tone, and the manly

brotherly kindness of him whose earthly career has closed.

The tendency with many persons of culture is to fall back from the common struggles of men, and in some delicious solitude to nurse their "slothful loves and dainty sympathies." But this is not the noblest nor the wisest way. It is not thus we best serve our kind, or our Creator. There is hard, rough work to be done, misery to be lightened and soothed, the false to be put down and the true set up in its place, wrong to be scourged into shame and fear, and right to be maintained and defended. Do not shrink from this field of labor, my brethren. Where the need seems the greatest, and the battle the sorest, throw yourselves among the combatants. And that you may be well assured and well sustained, be Christian men, bound by a personal attachment to a known and trusted Redeemer. In all proper ways own and confess that attachment, not that the acknowledgment will make you safer, but it will make you stronger, will honor the Lord of life and glory, and be another satisfactory memory to those who drop their tears over your grave. Let us—not as being wiser than you, my brethren, but as speaking to you the word of the Lord—advise you to this course, And lose no time. Soon with each of you—soon with us on this earth—the eye will lose its luster; soon your hand will forget its cunning; soon your

breasts—like the gentle, kindly breast that is still and motionless here—will cease to beat. Art will continue and advance; life will hold on its way—politics and trade will engross, and poetry will enrapture and history record, but you and I will have gone beyond their reach—the throbbings and pulsations of the great world-ocean will no more affect us. Our lot will have been settled irrevocably. Let us now—as far as we can—make our calling sure, our confidence in Christ sure, our hope of acceptance sure, our sonship to God sure, so shall there be here unity in our being; conscious, by serving God here, when we go to Him, we shall change, not our spirit, or character, or master, but only the plan and quality of our service, "Whether we live, etc., we are the Lord's."

THE DEAD.

For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him.—LUKE XX. 38.

FROM these words we infer:

I. That all good men, whether their bodies are in the grave or existing on the earth, **are alive before God.** Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had long been in their graves, long gone to dust, yet they were living. The visible world of men and the invisible world of spirits are both present to the eye of God as "one community" of living beings.

Death is not the extinction of being, but the mere transition in its mode. All the generations of men that have ever appeared on this earth are living, thinking, acting still. God is not the "God of the dead, but of the *living*."

II. That all good men, whether their bodies are in the grave or existing on this earth, **live unto God.** "All live *unto* Him." They all form therefore *one* holy blessed community, burning with one great love, pursuing one great aim. Glorious oneness this!

UNSANCTIFIED AFFLICTION.

BY THE REV. D. MOORE.

'*O Lord, are not Thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.*"—JER. v. 3.

THE words may suggest to us the consideration of a subject more or less belonging to all of us, namely, the danger of unsanctified or unimproved afflictions. We all know what the law of God's household is with regard to chastening, and what misgivings of our spiritual state we may well have, if we pass through life without it. But then we might have chastening, and yet not bring forth the fruit of chastening; might feel the stroke of the rod, and yet not hear the voice

of the rod. It was so with the Jews in our text and the fact suggests a solemn thought, namely, that chastening despised, or chastening resisted, or chastening unblest, cannot leave us in the state in which we were before. That which would profit the soul if used well, must be hurtful to it if used ill. The remedies of heaven cannot be inoperative; they must aggravate the maladies which they are not allowed to heal, and will make the face harder than a rock, if they induce not a tender and softened heart.

Let us proceed to investigate some forms of this unsanctified chastening, as they appear in the several expressions of the text, and then consider how the evil of which it warns us may be kept away.

I. **First, with regard to unsanctified or unimproved chastening.** The first impression in the text seems to set forth that misuse of it which comes of insensibility. "Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction." The language may be taken to describe, not so much the receiving of correction in the spirit of defiant and avowed contempt, as the act of setting lightly by affliction, of not bestowing upon it the attention it deserves, having no reverence for its Author, and no consideration for its design or end. Hence we are open to the truth of the text, whenever the divine chastise-

ment is received by us in a heedless and inconsiderate spirit.

II. But the text adverts to a yet more offending and presumptuous deportment under affliction, namely, **when the chastisements of God are received in a stout-hearted, rebellious, defying spirit.** Not only have they refused to receive correction, but they have made their faces harder than a rock. In this case, as we see, God is not left out of sight. On the contrary, He is believed and felt to be the Author of all permitted sufferings. The awful impiety is, that He is regarded as the unjust author. The heart secretly arraigns the wisdom and goodness of His purpose, declaring the utter impossibility of any resulting good, and by a cherished hardihood of spirit threatening to prove the truth of its own convictions. You have a painful picture of this state of men, in the ninth chapter of Isaiah, where Ephraim, resisting the Divine judgments, is represented as saying in the pride and stoutness of his heart, "The walls are fallen down, but we will build them up with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars." Thus the heart is like an anvil; every stroke that God lays upon it only reverberates and returns the blow. It was bad enough when He had smitten us and we did not grieve, when He had consumed us and we refused to receive correction; but now, with awful impiety, we, as it

were, dare Him to do His worst; we make our faces harder than a rock, and refuse to return.

III. But let us consider how these dreadful effects may be prevented, and the chastenings of God turned to a sanctified account.

1. And first we must be careful to acknowledge the design of God in sending our trials, and do all we can to bring that design about. "Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved" —plainly showing that God intended them to be grieved; "Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to return"—a clear intimation that the very purpose of their chastisement was to make them return. Hence our first care should be to see that any chastisement that God sends us is of a truth accomplishing its mission. Afflictions are designed to promote the advancement and improvement of character.

2. Again, in order that chastening may be blessed to us, we must have a care that we do not become weary under it, however long it may continue. If we restrain prayer, and relax effort, and lose confidence, and close up the book of God's promises as not belonging to us; then, though tried in the fire, we shall not be purged by the fire; though chastened, we shall not be blessed. and if the grace of God interpose not, we shall soon become as those who make their faces harder than a rock, and refuse to return.

A FATHER'S THOUGHT OVER HIS CHILD'S GRAVE.

I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.—2 SAM. xii. 23.

THE context shows David in two aspects. First: *Suffering as a sinner.* He had committed a great sin, and the loss of his child was a retribution. Secondly: *Reasoning as a saint.* "And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." The text implies David's belief in three things.

I. **The unreturnableness of the dead.** "He shall not return to me." He felt that all grief was useless, all prayer was unavailing. The dead return not again. "When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return." "I shall behold man no more in the land of the living," said Hezekiah. First: *There is no returning to discharge neglected duties.* Duties which we have neglected in relation to our children, our servants, our neighbors, our country, we can never return after to discharge. They remain undone. "There is no work, knowledge, or device in the grave," etc. Secondly: *There is no returning to recover lost opportunities.* Lost Sabbaths, lost sermons, lost means of grace, no one

comes back from the grave to redeem. If there is no return to the earth—(1) How foolish is it to set our hearts upon it. (2) How important to finish its work as we go on. The text implies David's belief—

II. **In the certainty of his own dissolution.** "I shall go to him." He had no doubt on the subject, nor has any one any reason to doubt. "It is appointed unto all men once to die." "One generation cometh, and another passeth away." "We must all die, and be as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." First: *The certainty of death is universally admitted with the understanding.* There is no room left for questioning it. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, from Christ to this hour. Secondly: *The certainty of death is universally denied by the life.* All men live as if they were immortal. How morally infatuated is our race! The text implies David's belief—

III. **In the reunion after death.** "I shall go to him." First: *The reunion he believed in was spiritual.* It evidently means more than going to his grave, and the mingling of their dust together. There would be no consolation, in this. Secondly: *The reunion he believed in was conscious.* They would feel themselves together, recognize each other as child and father. The doctrine of a recognition of spirits in a future

world may be argued by the laws of mental association, the benevolence of God, and the allusions of Scripture. Thirdly: *The reunion he believed in was happy.* There would be no consolation in the idea of an unhappy union. (1) He believed that his child was happy. Infants go to heaven. "Of such," says Christ, "is the kingdom of heaven." The men who deny this have dehumanized their nature by a barbarous theology. (2) He believed that he was safe. He felt that he should go to him, be with him in that happy world.

Let these thoughts of death aid us to fulfil the mission of life.

THE DAY OF ADVERSITY.

In the day of adversity consider.—ECCLES. vii. 14.

"MAN that is born of a woman, is of few days," etc. This world has fitly been compared to a wilderness, or valley of tears. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards." It matters not who were our ancestors; what the splendors attending our birth; what our earthly prospects: we are heirs of sorrow, etc., are hourly exposed to a thousand sources of misery. And what is the best course to be adopted amid the distresses of life? Shall we endeavor to fly to the giddy scenes of worldly dissipation? Shall we sink into sullen apathy; and by stoical stupidity

try to blunt our feelings, and create as great an amount of insensibility as possible? Alas! what miserable refuges are these! The only balm which can soothe in distress, is the consolation of true religion. And by that we are admonished in the text, "In the day of adversity to consider." Let us then ascertain.

I. **What is to be understood by the day of adversity.**

1. When we are deprived of the temporal good things of this life.

2. May include seasons of domestic bereavements.

God has wisely arranged that families should not be removed at a stroke. How soon the first human pair were distressed by beholding their beloved Abel stretched out on the cold ground a silent corpse! All families know what bereavements mean. There is Abraham left to finish his pilgrimage without his beloved Sarah. David severed from his beloved Jonathan. Rachel weeping for her children. Sometimes these bereavements are peculiarly distressing: such was the case with the lovely Rachel, who in the same hour became a mother and a corpse. So, too, with David, who had to mourn over the death of his rebellious son. "O Absalom, my son," etc. So Ezekiel, who was called to listen to the divine mandate, "Son of man, behold I take away the desire of thine eyes with a stroke." So the widow

of Nain, who was following the funeral of her only son. These are days of adversity indeed. Then, there are,

3. Times of bodily afflictions.

When wearisome nights and days appointed unto us; when we are confined to our apartments, or to our bed; when the body is racked with pain, scorched with fever, or wasted by pining disease; when food is bitter; when light is painful; conversation afflictive; when life has lost all its charms—yet, how often is this the case! How many thousands have felt all this; yea, more than this! Have not some of you felt it? Well, any of these we may conceive to be the day of adversity. Observe, then,

II. **The course prescribed.** "In the day of adversity consider." Now, I remark,

1. That we are naturally adverse to consideration.

2. In adversity we have many facilities to promote consideration.

The mind is made serious—sometimes broken down; driven out of the giddy scenes of the world. Chased, as it were, into privacy; shut out from external objects of attraction.

3. Afflictions have often produced consideration.

How many when rich and affluent were careless! God took them down from slippery places, and in their adversity they sought God early. How

many have rejected all counsel, etc.; but when their advisers have been laid in the silent tomb, their advice and entreaties have been remembered and blest. Thousands have had to bless God that ever they were afflicted.

III. **But what should we especially consider in the day of adversity.**

1. That all our sorrows are the result of sin.

2. Consider that all our sufferings are under the control of God.

Yes, every event is either his appointment, or has his all-wise permission, see Isa. xlv. 7; see also, Job ii. 10, and xxxiv. 29. Afflictions are not the result of accident, arise not out of the dust, not the work of our enemies merely. God sees all, watches all, appoints all, and permits all. What a blessed thought that we are never excluded from the providential regards of God! A providence wise, just, and benevolent. Consider,

3. That our adversities are for the most salutary purposes.

4. That our adversities are mercifully mitigated.

5. That our seasons of adversity are of limited duration.

"Day" of adversity.

Application.

Let me remind you, that the three worlds revealed to us, are essentiallv different from each other.

1. This world is a state of mixture; joy and sorrow; health and pain; light and darkness.

2. Hell is the region of unmixed evil. There is all night, all darkness, all wo, all despair.

3. Heaven is a world of unmixed felicity. Day, health, life, joy. Consider the end of life, is to prepare for this world of blessedness.

HEAVEN A BETTER COUNTRY.

"*But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly.*"—HEB XI. 16.

THE text refers to the believing patriarchs described in the former part of the chapter; but is equally applicable to all who count themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and who are traveling in the way to the heavenly Zion. Observe,

I. **The country referred to.**

"A better country, that is, heavenly." Sometimes heaven is described as a city—a kingdom—a temple—an inheritance. In the text it is called a country, doubtless in allusion to the country of Canaan, which was a striking type of the heavenly rest. This heavenly country is only partially revealed to us. Perhaps at present we are not capable of knowing much of its nature, etc. In the text it is, however, stated to be "a better country," better, infinitely better, than the present world. It is better, as,

1. It is a more exalted country.

The most glorious part of the creation. Where Jehovah of hosts has His palace—throne—court, etc. The heaven of heavens. Full of the rays of the divine glory.

2. It is a more holy country.

Not polluted. No sin within its happy territories.

3. It is a more healthful country.

Sin, cause of disease; therefore, as there is no sin, there is no curse. No bodily, no mental, no spiritual afflictions there. "Inhabitants never say that they are sick."

4. It is a more happy country.

Sources of disquietude, grief and pain, unfeared and unknown. No weeds of bitterness—no crosses—open foes—false friends—imperfect brethren—no poverty—nor bereavements—nor toil—no fears—no temptation—no death.

5. A more abiding country.

Not to be pilgrims but residents. Not visitors for a season, but inhabitants forever. That inheritance is incorruptible—that crown fades not—that kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

6. It is a better country, as it is the region of perfection and of consummate glory.

Perfect capacities—perfect enjoyments—perfect security—perfect employments—perfect day. Unclouded light. Meridian glory. Bliss unchanging and unchangeable.

II. **Believers desire this better country.**

And as such,

1. They have secured a title to it.

By faith in Christ Jesus they are accepted of God, are His children, and, if children, then *heirs*, etc. "Begotten again to a lively hope," etc. Names written in heaven. As such,

2. They are laboring for a meetness to enjoy it.

That better country is a heavenly one. It is necessary, therefore, that they be heavenly. Born from above. Heavenly nature. Heavenly dispositions. Heavenly conversation, etc.

3. They labor and pray for it.

Express their desires to God. Seek grace to enable them to travel onwards until they appear perfect before the God of gods in Zion.

4. They converse of it, and live in the hope of its eternal enjoyment.

They seek the company of heaven-bound travelers. Speak of the glories of that kingdom. And their souls glow with the hope of dwelling in it forever and ever.

"The thoughts of such amazing bliss
Do constant joys create."

APPLICATION.

1. Encourage believers to go forwards diligently, with cheerfulness and delight, until an abundant entrance is administered unto them through the gates into the city. 2. Endeavor to persuade

the thoughtless children of this vain world to become interested in matters relative to their immortal welfare and to seek this better country.

DEATH OF AN INFANT.

BY D. C. EDDY, D.D.

"Is it well with the child?"

SACRED memories cluster around the death and burial of an infant. At its birth joys unknown to the hearts of others are stirred in the parent's bosom, and a world of affections opened before him, which he alone is able to explore. At its death, his heart feels a loss such as he has never before sustained, and his affections receive a shock such as can be given by no other loss. My object is to lead afflicted parents to feel that it is well with them, and well with their departed children; and in view of this I remark, that the death of your child was,

1. *A righteous event.*
2. *The death of your child is a wise event.*
3. *The death of your child is a benevolent event.*
4. *The death of your child is glorious.*

1. They sing a new song—a song which no man can learn—which none know but themselves: it is the song of innocence, swelling out from infant voices and echoing through the world above. 2. They are redeemed from among men.

They are not angels, nor celestial spirits. They belong to earth; they have enjoyed the benefits of the atonement, and the grace of redemption. 3. They are pure, and undefiled. To all the sins of men they are strangers. In their mouth is no guile; and they stand before the throne of God without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Who are they? Where on earth can such a class of persons be found? To the army of infants, and to them only, is such language applicable. (Rev. xiv. 1–5.) It must refer to them and no others. Hence, the glory which is in the death of children. They are changed in early life from corruption and rise to celestial life and beauty. Transplanted they are, from the cold bosom and cheerless wilderness of earth to bloom and thrive in the paradise of God.

Listen bereaved parents, and you will hear your children singing the song of paradise!

EXTRACT OF FUNERAL ADDRESS.

BY BISHOP E. G. ANDREWS.

WE know indeed very little of that unseen life into which our friend has entered. The Scriptures abound in magnificent imagery well calculated to awaken admiration and desire; but they leave us uninformed as to the particulars of that exalted existence, its conditious, its rela-

tions, and its employments. A recent writer aptly named her book *The Gates Ajar*, indicating how slight and transient is the opening through which the light and love of heaven fall upon our eyes. As a belated traveler, storm-beaten, and hurrying to those he loves, suddenly, through some door opened to admit another traveler to his home, catches for an instant the voices of welcome and gladness, the strains of music, and the glow of light and warmth diffused within, and then, the door closing, is left alone with the darkness and the storm, so only do we catch glimpses of the life beyond. Or, as some mariner, sailing along a coast dim with distance and with mist, now and then, by some bold projecting headland, learns the shortening distance between himself and the haven which he seeks, and joyfully pictures to himself the home of his birth and his love, so only can we survey the future to which the Gospel invites us.

Nevertheless, we may and should comfort ourselves as knowing that the toil and burden-bearing of this our friend are exchanged for the repose of heaven; that the battle is ended, and he is a crowned victor; that the struggle of many years after the likeness of the Master is now completed by his being brought to see Him as he is, and to union ineffable and eternal with Him whom his soul loved. In the midst of grief and tears we will rejoice in the life and immortality brought to

light through the Gospel. "Thanks be to Him who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But we comfort ourselves with memory as well as with hope. We rejoice and thank God for a life which leaves behind it a radiance of purity, goodness, and peace, such as few bequeath to those who survive them.

THE GATES OF DEATH.

BY THE REV. J. E. GRAHAM.

"*Have the gates of death been opened unto thee?*"

We are in the presence chamber of death. We stand beside the mortality of one to whom the gates of death have been opened to let her soul pass within. They open inward, and constantly they swing to receive the parting soul.

I. **Death the mystery because life is a mystery.**

1. No one has ever seen life itself.

Its secret is hid with God.

Scientists are searching for life, but find it not.

2. No one has ever seen life itself leave the body.

We know a life only as contained in a living body, death only as the negative of a living body.

II. **Death must ever be a mystery to an unbeliever.**

1. Accepting no revelation from the Spirit all spiritual things must be unknown quantities.

2. Death is a thing of the spirit, because the material body is practically the same immediately before death or immediately after.

3. Death is a recognized fact, an unaccounted-for fact, hence a mystery.

III. **Death is no longer a mystery to the believer.**

1. One has opened the gates of death outward and returned to tell us of death.

2. He taught us of death while still living.

3. The things within the gates of death have been revealed to us by the inspiration of God through the apostles.

4. The gates of death were opened to our friend, and she came back, or rather paused on the threshold, to tell us of the things she saw within. She had been speechless for days, but just as the gates swung open for her, speech returned. Loving farewells were spoken to fond ones. "Mother, it is getting dark," she said, "but who is singing? Oh, is it not beautiful? Don't cry. It is all right, good-by." A tender heart soon ceased to beat—the gates of death were passed.

5. Not infrequently scenes like these come to our rescue, and thus the gates of death are opened for an instant, and death, hidden from the unbeliever and from science, is no longer a mystery to the spiritual mind.

6. Senses too gross to receive the things of the Spirit, but shall we question?

Sympathy for the bereaved is deep and heartfelt, assurance of her welfare and her gain cannot be questioned.

Her life of faith and service terminated joyously, and her death, like the sun breaking through a storm cloud at the close of day, gave promise for the beautiful to-morrow, beyond clouds, storm, or suffering.

THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH.

BY THE REV. JONATHAN EDMONDSON.

For the living know that they shall die.—ECCLESIASTES ix. 5.

LIFE is but a short journey from the cradle to the tomb; and death, with its awful solemnities, must soon be experienced by men of all nations.

I. **What is implied in dying?** The question is bold, and cannot be fully answered; for the living have not experienced it, and the dead do not reveal the profound secret. Some suppose that it implies an utter extinction of being; but they neither regard the dictates of reason, nor the discoveries of revelation, both of which proclaim the soul of man immortal.

Death implies **a separation of soul and body.** Man is a compound being, of body and soul, of matter and spirit. His body is of the dust; his

soul is from God. These are mysteriously united; but death dissolves the union, and breaks the unknown tie. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7). The separation is awful to a good man. Frail nature shrinks at the prospect! What, then, must it be to a bad man?

Another thing implied in death is, *a final departure out of this world.* "Here we have no continuing city" (Heb. xiii. 14).

The last thing implied in death is, *an entrance upon a new state of existence.*

II. **How do the living know that they shall die?** The living know, *by the appointment of God*, that they shall die.

The **death of others** is a proof that we must die. Men are dying daily and hourly. Perhaps there is not a moment in which some are not passing out of time into eternity.

We know we shall die **by what we feel in ourselves.** Every pain we feel, every degree of weariness and weakness, proclaims the approach of death.

III. **What improvement should we make of this important subject?**

We should *sit loose to the world.*

Let us carefully *improve the various scenes of life* through which we pass. Thus, when we come to reflect, in the hour of death, upon our conduct

in life, we shall have cause to bless God for that grace which has enabled us to do His blessed will.

Our sins should die before us, lest they sink us lower than the grave. Death destroys the body; but it cannot destroy sin.

Let us earnestly *seek that spiritual life*, which cannot be destroyed by death. That man who is spiritually alive, may look at death with boldness, and bid defiance to its utmost rage. He has nothing to fear. God is with him. Angels wait to conduct him to the regions of immortality. And even his perishing body will rise again, to die no more. *Amen.*

A PASTOR'S TRIBUTE.

BY THE REV. THOMAS B. McLEOD.

AS our brother has been for many years in the public eye, as the servant of the church at large, and as this assemblage of mourners is composed of numerous representatives from the wide field in which his noble energies were spent it seemed fitting to his friends that the conduct of these services should be put in the hands of men who represent the entire church, and with whom he has been intimately associated. At the same time, I feel that the exercises should not close without a word from one whom our brother called

his pastor. Under the circumstances, it must be only a word. Even if I were not disabled, I could hardly trust myself to say what is in my heart, which is greatly distressed this day. A great sorrow has come upon me, and my place is by the side of his bereaved family.

You have heard the testimony of those who have known him and his work in the prominent places he has occupied for so many years. His ability, fidelity, consecration, missionary zeal; his earnestness and eloquence in pleading for the evangelization of the world; his wisdom and administrative capacity; his sympathy and tenderness and sweetness of temper, have been set forth in those noble tributes to which we have listened. My words shall be of his last days in the sick-room. That room has been to me like a veritable Mount of Transfiguration, where I have beheld the glory of the Lord reflected on the face of His servant. To us it seemed hard that a man of his physical vigor and elasticity, so full of hope and ambition, so richly equipped for service and endowed with such affluent resources of mind and heart, should be arrested in mid-career and bid to drop the work he loved and for which he was so eminently qualified. But it did not seem hard to him. He committed his body and soul, his present and future, into the hands of the Lord whom he loved and trusted, ready to accept His will, whatever that will might be. If further service awaited

him here, it was well; if promotion to higher service above, it was better. I have enjoyed a great privilege, and an indescribable confirmation of my faith, in being permitted to witness his patience, his resignation, his confidence and joy in the Lord. The great spiritual verities of the other world were very real to him. His faith penetrated the visible forms of things and grasped the invisible. God, and Christ, and heaven, and eternal life were as actual as his own personal identity. As I witnessed all this day by day, and heard his triumphant words, and saw the radiance of heaven shining in his face, I said to myself again and again, Books on apologetics are for me superfluous.

Before sitting down I must deliver a message which he gave me for you, his brethren in the ministry. He charged me to assure you that he was dying in the faith—the same faith in which all the generations of believers in the past have lived and died; that he was strong and of good courage, and his heart was stayed on his God; that he had a vision and revelation of the Lord; that his faith was stronger than ever in God, in Christ, in the atoning sacrifice of the Redeemer, in the power of the Gospel to transform the world. He bade me say that his only hope for himself and for his fellow-men was in the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Jesus. He took no comfort from the recollection of anything that he had done. He

confessed himself a poor sinner saved by grace, and never was sinner more conscious of his personal unworthiness, or more devoutly grateful to his Redeemer for salvation, than was this saint of God on the eve of his translation to glory. Strange, is it not, brethren, that the men who seem to walk with God, who live as if in the presence-chamber of the King, whose lives are as "the breath of a perpetual prayer," are always the lowest before God in confession! Our brother charged you and me to be instant in season and out of season in preaching the everlasting Gospel to sinning, dying men, and never cease to believe that the gracious plan of God shall be fulfilled, and that the whole earth shall be brought into subjection to the authority of Jesus Christ.

Friends, such a man as this never dies. The death of such a man is but the unloosing of his powers. It is not defeat, nor collapse, but achievement. I know not how far and wide the fame of this man will ring, or what the world's estimate of him will be; but this I know, that he was a great and good man in the sight of the Lord; and the work he did, and the words he spake, and the character he built, and the influences he set in motion, will outlive the stars.

BALAAM.

BY THE REV. M. F. SADLER.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.—NUMBERS xxiii. 10.

IN looking over the life of Balaam we cannot help asking, Was such an aspiration as this utterly unfitting on his lips? At first sight not so much as we should have thought. He constantly tells Balak that he could only speak what the Lord had put into his mouth. He apparently puts from him the bribes of Balak: and there is one of his moral sayings which has been preserved to us by the prophet Micah, which shows the very high view indeed which he had of God's character. It appears that the idolatrous King Balak consulted the prophet as to how God was to be worshiped. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the Most High God? . . . Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams and with ten thousands of rivers of oil; shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" To this the prophet replies, "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Surely it was no hypocrisy in such a man to pray, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." And yet this prayer was utterly inconsistent with his life and utterly

inconsistent with the desires of his covetous heart. He committed the vulgarest, the grossest of all inconsistencies, of desiring to die the death whilst he was not living the life of the righteous.

Now, the death of the righteous is the termination of a righteous life. There is nothing in the death itself, in its circumstances, to make us pray that we may die such a death; for the death of the righteous may be by a lingering and painful disease, or it may be by cruel torture, by the rack, or by fire, or by wild beasts, as were the deaths of the martyrs. For a man, then, to pray that he may die the death, and, of course, by it enter into the heaven of the righteous, whilst he is not diligently preparing for it, is really as absurd as for a man to think that he may win a race without running it, or that he may conquer in a battle without fighting it, or that he may reap a harvest without sowing it.

What then are our prayers? What are our lives? And how do the prayers correspond with the lives?

CLINGING TO JESUS.

"*Seeing then we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*" —Heb. iv. 14.

"Holy Saviour, friend unseen,
Since on Thy arm thou bid'st me lean,
Help me throughout life's varying scene,
By faith to cling to Thee!"

THE IMPORTANCE OF ALWAYS BEING PREPARED FOR THE TIME OF OUR DEPARTURE.

BY THE REV. G. M. ALLSHOUSE.

Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.—MARK xiii. 35-36.

INTRODUCTION.

THE great lesson for us to learn from this text is that we should always be ready for death. This tabernacle must be dissolved. We should be ready for that event. Since so much has been done for man, preparation is possible. If preparation is not made, sad will the results be. If the soul is prepared, grand will be the results. Consider:

I. **This preparation is possible.**

1. Provisions have been made for man's instruction.

(*a*) Nature's light; (*b*) Bible; (*c*) Holy Spirit; (*d*) Ministry of angels; (*e*) Ministry of good people.

2. Provisions for man's cleansing.

(*a*) Blood of Christ.

3. Provisions for man's spiritual development.

(*a*) Laws of growth (conditions can be complied with).

II. **Sad are the results if preparation is neglected.**

1. Death a sad event for such a man.

(*a*) It is the funeral of the soul.

2. His condition is miserable

(*a*) Intense suffering (figurative expressions indicative of this). "Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth"—Pangs of a guilty conscience—Remembrance of (1) Great salvation neglected; (2) Good that might have been done; (3) That his condition might have been better.

3. Finds himself unfit for Heaven.

(*a*) Impure; (*b*) Not prepared for the higher service; (*c*) Not in harmony with celestial surroundings (no kindred spirit there).

4. A hopeless state—No second probation—Lost forever.

III. Glorious are the results if man is prepared.

1. Death to him is a happy event. Beautiful scenes meet his eye—A glorified Christ—A beautiful home—Saints in glory.

2. His is a happy condition (Figurative expression indicative of great joy.) Fulness of joy—Perfect peace—Endless bliss.

3. Finds himself prepared for heaven.

(*a*) Preparatory course has been taken (1) Prepared for higher service (2) In harmony with celestial surroundings (3) Finds kindred spirits there—Heaven is *home* for the saints.

CONCLUSION.

How careful we should live, ever seeking that

preparation that is necessary. Nothing else can take its place. No grand funeral nor eloquent funeral address by some eloquent divine, nor flattering obituary written by some friend, can take the place of that preparation that should have been made.

ANGELIC GUARDIANS.

BY THE REV. M. F. SADLER.

Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.—2 KINGS vi. 15, 16.

THE King of Syria, hearing that Elisha, by his prophetical knowledge, informed the King of Israel of the orders he gave in his bed-chamber, that his army should encamp in such and such a place, so that he, the King of Israel, might order his armies to avoid that place, sent his soldiers to take Elisha. When the servant of Elisha saw the city surrounded by the army of the Syrians he was struck with fear, till Elisha asked God to open his eyes, at which he saw the city surrounded with the hosts of heaven to defend his master.

I. Now there is a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews in which we are told that we of the Christian Church, even whilst we are on earth, are come to the Mount Zion, the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels. We are just as much surrounded by these angelic

beings as was Elisha and his servant. Nothing then can happen to us except by the permission of God, and we shall not know till we are in another world, how often we have been defended and rescued by them in this.

II. But we have more than this fellowship with, and defense by, angels. If we are on the side of God, then we have God with us; nay, we have much more than this, for the angels seem to be external to us, whereas we are told by the Apostle St. John (1 Epis. iv. 4), that "greater is He that is in us than He that is in the world." And so another apostle asks, "Who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?" and another says, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose."

SLEEP IN JESUS.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.—1 THESS. iv. 14.

"Salvation, O the joyful sound,
What pleasure to our ears!
A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears."

YES, this is the glory of the Gospel, that it completely meets the condition and exigency of the sinner. Man is guilty, and it reveals forgiveness; man is an alien, and it brings him back to the divine family; man is unholy, and it regener-

ates and sanctifies him; man is wretched, and it imparts abiding peace; man is dying, and it reveals to him a better world; man is destined to be the resident of the dust, and it throws its celestial radiance across the tomb;—and addresses us, "But I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him." (1 Thess. iv. 13, 14).

I. **The pleasing metaphor by which death is described.** "Sleep." The idea is very commonly presented us in revelation. The metaphor of sleep represents death,

1. As a state of rest. And this is a perfect contrast to the state of the Christian in life. Now, he is a servant, and has to toil in the vineyard of Christ. But then the master says, It is enough; "well done, good and faithful servant." Then the metaphor denotes,

2. A state of unconsciousness. In sleep, the avenues of the senses are closed. "We see not —we hear not," etc. Are insensible to all events which surround us. So in death, we are strangers to all that is done beneath the sun, Job xiv. 21. "His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them." The metaphor further shows,

3. The limited duration of this state. A few

hours' sleep, and it is over. So death has not the signet of perpetuity upon it. It will only detain us one short-lived night, and then be over forever. Notice,

II. **The important characteristic in the death of the righteous.** "They that sleep in Jesus." Now, this implies,

1. That they have been savingly united to Christ in life.

2. It implies that they have died in Christ, as well as lived in Him.

3. To sleep in Jesus implies that they sleep in the personal certain hope of an interest in all Christ hath obtained for them. Observe then,

III. **The glorious declaration concerning those who sleep in Jesus.** "Will God bring with him." The subject refers to Christ's second advent, see ver. 16. Then will Jesus raise His saints, and they shall ascend with Him, as His illustrious train; and so be forever with the Lord. Observe, those who sleep in Jesus,

1. Shall have a part in the first resurrection. "Christ, the first-fruits," etc. "Blessed and holy are they who have," etc. "The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning."

2. They shall possess the glorious image of Jesus. See Phil. iii. 20, 21; and 1 John iii. 2.

3. They shall be coheirs with Christ forever and ever. Rom. viii. 17; John xvii. 21; Rev. iii. 21.

APPLICATION.

1. Learn, the great object of true religion, is to prepare for death, the grave, and eternity.

2. Our consolation at the removal of saints.

3. The happiness of the completed family at the last day. No more sickness, or curse, or death.

CHRIST THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.—JOHN xi. 25, 26. (S. S.)

IN the history before us we have an account of a heavy affliction that had befallen a family, through the death of one, to whom Jesus had shown a very peculiar attachment. He had been solicited to come and help them; but He had delayed His visit till the sick person had been dead four days. This, however, though liable to misconstruction, He had done intentionally, in order that He might manifest more fully to the disconsolate sisters His own power and glory. Accordingly, when they intimated their persuasion, that, if He would pray to God for the restoration of their brother to life, God would grant His request He told them that He needed not beseech God to effect it; for that He Himself was the resurrection

and the life: and was able to impart either bodily or spiritual life to whomsoever He would.

In considering this most remarkable declaration, we shall notice,

I. **That part which relates to Himself.** Martha having, in conformity with the prevailing opinion of the Jews, expressed her expectation of a general resurrection at the last day, Jesus says to her:

"I am the resurrection."

Our Lord, in His divine nature, possessed omnipotence, necessarily, and of Himself.

"I am the life."

In this term our Lord proceeds further than in the former, and asserts, that as He is the author and first-fruits of the resurrection, so is He the very principle of life whereby His people live.

Let us now prosecute our inquiries into.

II. **That which respects His people.** There is a remarkable correspondence between the two latter and the two former clauses of the text; the latter declaring the operation of the powers expressed in the former.

1. As being "the resurrection," He will raise the bodies of his people.

2. As being "the life," He will preserve the souls of His people unto everlasting life.

The bodies of the saints must undergo the sentence denounced against sin, Rom. viii. 10; (though death to *them* is scarcely worthy the name of death: it is rather a sleep, from which

they shall be awakened at the morning of the resurrection); ver. 11, Acts vii. 60; (1 Thess. iv. 14); but their souls shall never die: none shall prevail against them (Isa. liv. 17); none shall pluck them out of Christ's hands (John x. 28); their life is hid in Him beyond the reach of men or devils (Col. iii. 3); the vital principle within them is an ever-living seed (1 Pet. i. 23); an overflowing fountain (John iv. 14); as long as Christ liveth, they shall live also (John xiv. 19). The separation that will take place between their souls and bodies will only introduce them to a higher state of existence, which they shall enjoy until the day that their bodies shall be awakened from their slumbers, to participate and enhance their bliss.

Twice, in these few words, are these blessings limited to believers: not because our Lord disregards good works, or because they shall not be rewarded; but because we cannot do any good work unless we first receive strength from Christ by faith (John xv. 5); and because, if we obtained life by working, we should have whereof to glory before God: and God has decreed that no flesh shall glory in His presence, and that we shall glory only in the Lord (Rom. iii. 27; Eph. ii. 8, 9; 1 Cor. i. 29–31).

The pointed interrogation with which our Lord closed this address to Martha directs us how to improve this subject: it suggests to us:

1. That all persons, however eminent in their

profession, or decided in their character, ought to "examine themselves whether they be in the faith."

2. That the believing of this record is the most effectual antidote against the troubles of life, or the fears of death.

THE FAITH AND HOPE OF JOB IN HIS REDEEMER.

For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.—JOB xix. 25–27.

THIS celebrated text has been variously interpreted. While some, without any solid proof, have considered it as an interpolation, others have limited its meaning to the return of temporal felicity to Job; but if we carefully examine the preceding chapters, it will appear that he had no hope of deliverance from his calamitous circumstances, in the present world. Yet, while he was weighed down by a heavy load of afflictions, and misrepresented by his mistaken friends, he looked forward to the coming of his Redeemer; and had a comfortable assurance that he would avenge his wrongs, raise him from the dead, and bless him with the beatific vision.

First, Job had a living Redeemer; secondly, he thought his afflictions would terminate in death; but, thirdly, he had a joyful hope of a happy resurrection from the dead.

I. **Job had a living Redeemer.**

1. *The work of a Redeemer is great and highly important.* First, he pays a price for the lost possession of his brother: "If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold" (Lev. xxv. 25). Secondly, he saves and delivers him: "He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy" (Ps. cvi. 10). Thirdly, he vindicates and avenges his brother: "The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer" (Num. xxxv. 19).

2. *Christ is the Redeemer of men.* He bought us with His blood. We "were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 19). He saves and delivers His people from the guilt and power, and from the pollution and punishment of sin. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. ii. 14). And He will vindicate and avenge His church: in allusion to this, He says,

"The day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemer is come" (Isa. lxiii. 4).

3. *The Son of God, our Great Redeemer, was living in the days of Job;* and he had a saving interest in him, in the afflictions which he suffered from the devil and from men. He says, "My Redeemer liveth." If our Lord had no existence prior to His incarnation, Job should have spoken in the future tense, saying, "I know that my Redeemer shall live;" but he spake correctly, for his Redeemer was then living. He had glory with the Father "before the world was" (John xvii. 5). He was rich in a prior state of existence, yet for our sakes "He became poor" (2 Cor. viii. 9). He was the only begotten Son of the Father (John iii. 16).

4. *But how does it appear that the Redeemer of Job was the Son of God?* From these words, "He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." This could not be affirmed of any *goel*, or kinsman of Job, who was then living; but the prediction, if applied to Jesus, is exceedingly appropriate. It was in part fulfilled when He appeared in our nature; for "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. iv. 4). But it will be completely fulfilled when He arises in judgment; for the words may be rendered, "He shall arise" from his seat, and stand upon His feet, as a judge, to give sentence or to execute judgment. This was

the posture in which judges always delivered their sentence; and hence we frequently read in the Scriptures, of God arising to judgment (Job xxxi. 14; Ps. lxxiv. 22; lxxxii. 8).

5. *Job knew his divine Redeemer.* But how did he attain that knowledge? It might be by tradition. God had promised a Saviour and deliverer, and that promise was handed down from one generation to another. Besides, the promise which was given to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," was probably well known to Job; but it is most probable he knew his Redeemer by immediate revelation. God might make a discovery of this great truth to him,—first, to support him on his unparalleled affliction; and, secondly, to comfort and encourage the Church in after ages.

II. **Pious Job thought his affliction would terminate in death.**

1. *When he spake the words of the text, his skin was destroyed.* He fell into the hands of Satan by the permission of the Lord; and He smote him with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown (chap. ii. 6, 7). These were fiery eruptions, or ulcering eating sores, which destroyed the skin. "And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal." For *scrape*, says a learned author, the Chaldee and Arabic use a word commonly applied to pulling leaves and bark off from the tree. How deplorable was the state of Job, when scraping

himself with potsherds! Well might he say, "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, oh ye my friends!" (ver. 21).

2. *After his skin, he expected his whole body to be destroyed.* The word *worms* is not in the original, but is supplied by the translators; they seem to have conjectured that his skin was destroyed by worms, and that they would proceed to destroy the body. How far this opinion is correct, we know not; but Job certainly had an idea, that the destruction of the whole body would speedily follow the destruction of the skin. The word body is also supplied, and properly, because that was certainly intended.

3. *Death and the grave, with their solemn attendants, closed every earthly prospect of that deeply afflicted, but eminently holy, man.* He afterwards said, "I know Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living" (Job xxx. 23). And we also must die; but when, we know not. These bodies, however beautiful and strong, will perish in the grave. "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart" (Isa. lvii. 1). But, like Job, he hopes to rise again.

III. **Job had a joyful hope of a resurrection from the dead.**

1. He positively affirms that, after the destruction of his body, he should see God in his flesh. But how can that be the case, either with him or others, if the dead rise not? Man was created

with a body, and will live in an embodied state, to all eternity; but that cannot be without a resurrection, because his earthly and material frame returns to dust, as a sad punishment of his apostasy from God (Gen. iii. 19). How God will raise the dead is unknown; but the fact is certain. It was revealed to Job, and has been indubitably proved by the resurrection of Jesus. With these eyes of flesh we shall see God our Saviour. What a happy sight! Then the sorrows of life will be past, death will be destroyed, and a blessed eternity will follow!

2. I shall see for myself, he says, "and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Good men wish well to all; but they claim the blessings of grace and glory as their own. Others, no doubt, will see and enjoy the Redeemer; but I shall see and enjoy Him for myself. He will appear in my cause; He will deliver me from death and the grave; He will vindicate my character; and He will avenge me of my foes. And all this will take place, though my reins, or vitals, are consumed within me; for all things are possible with God; and He who made the world can raise the dead.

Inferences.

1. Jesus has been the hope of pious men in all ages. Abraham rejoiced to see his day, "and he saw it and was glad" (John viii. 56). Moses and all the prophets foretold his coming; and gave

witness, "that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43).

2. He is our only Redeemer and Saviour. We are lost, but He came to seek and to save us; we have enemies, but He has conquered them; we are dead, but we may live by Him forever.

3. It is both our duty and our privilege to renounce our own righteousness; to trust in Him only; to love and honor Him; and to follow Him in the regeneration, through evil report and good report. Amen.

THE STONE ROLLED AWAY.

BY THE REV. S. BARING-GOULD.

The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door.—MATT. xxviii. 2.

INTRODUCTION.

DIFFICULTY of harmonizing the accounts of the Resurrection.

It is probable that Christ arose at dawn, through the sealed stone, and that the angel descended "at the rising of the sun," when the women approached the sepulcher, and rolled back the stone to show them that CHRIST was risen.

SUBJECT.

The action was typical.

I. Sin was rolled away. Before Christ's

death and resurrection the condition of sinful man was deplorable. His iniquities weighed him down, there was no remission of guilt; every sinful act plunged him deeper, and more irrevocably, in the mire of guilt. He could not shake off the burden of the past, and start afresh. The past with all its horrors lay on him, like the sepulchral slab of the tomb. But now that is rolled away. "By the blood of the Covenant I have sent forth the prisoners out of the pit."

II. **The fear of death was rolled away.** This was the fear which, all their lifetime, held men in bondage; like the magnet mountain in the story, the attraction was irresistible, that drew men to death. Think of that fear! To count the pulsations of the heart, as the tick of the clock that draws towards cessation. As a writer of old said, "Every stroke of my heart that I listen to at night, sounds to me as the ax of a woodman hacking down the tree of life." Think of the fear of death weighing night and day on man, never shaken off, a haunting dread when he lies down at night, when he wakes in the morning. Death feared, because what it leads to is unknown.

Goethe, when dying, said in an agitated voice, "What is coming? Oh, it is dark, it is dark!" Such is death to the unbeliever, uncertainty and gloom—the stone is on the sepulcher.

The last words of the late Bishop of Salisbury

(Hamilton) were, "Oh, how bright!" with an ineffable smile—the stone was rolled away.

III. **The misery of separation was rolled away.** What a bitter thing must have been the separation of the heathen father from his dying child, the husband from the wife. No hope. A look at the dear, dear face, so soon to be consigned to the dust. No prospect of seeing it again, nor of hearing the loved voice. All the old sweet affection stilled in that dead heart forever. An aching void, no hope to fill it, a blank future, no light to illumine it.

I sometimes wonder how a heathen could survive the misery of parting with those dear to him.

But it is a different thing altogether to the Christian, the parting to him is only temporary, the prospect of meeting again is to him certain —so that this stone is rolled away.

CONCLUSION.

Glory be to Thee, O risen SAVIOUR, my hope, my desire, who hast rolled away the stone of my sins. and the fear of death that oppressed me and who hast given to me the hope, after this life ended, of meeting again those dear ones who have passed from my sight.

GOD'S CHASTENING.

Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.—DEUT. viii. 5.

THE journeyings of the ancient Hebrews from the house of bondage to the land of promise was typical; it was indirectly extended, covered with mystery, distinguished by mercy, marked by peculiar guidance. It was typical of our journey through this world.

God deals with us as a parent. The afflictive dispensations of the Almighty are the exercise of parental discipline, and they therefore call for filial consideration.

The parental relationship is frequently brought forward to illustrate the nearness, intimacy, affection of God's relation to His children.

I. **The afflictions of God's people proceed from the purest love of our Heavenly Father.**

There is love in all the sentiments of the text.

The same truth is illustrated by other parts of Scripture. Prov. iii. 11; Heb. xii. 6; Job v. 17; Psa. cxiv. 12.

All God's children are partakers of this chastening.

Suffering does not come from God. He overrules it, directs it.

Suffering is destructive: then it is an expression of displeasure.

Suffering is corrective: then it is an expression of fatherly care.

II. Afflictions are regulated by Divine wisdom.

They are not the result of chance or accident.

There may appear confusion in God's dealings; that is for want of perception. Before Him they are in exquisite order.

Establish the first principle, that God loves you; connect with this His sovereignty: then His wisdom will be apparent.

III. **All afflictions will issue in the highest good.**

All things work for good, not perhaps for gratification.

This is God's purpose in permitting them.

Consider:

1. *That the agency of our Heavenly Father is to be traced in all this.*

This is the characteristic of the saint. The child of God sees his Father's hand in all his circumstances.

2. *That we should confide in His goodness.*

He is our Father. Why should we distrust Him?

3. *That we should comply with His designs.*

It is a melancholy thing when afflictions produce irritation and resistance to God.

We must have the consciousness that we are the children of God.

A MESSAGE FROM GOD.

BY THE REV. JONATHAN EDMONDSON.

Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him.—ISA. iii. part of 10.

I. It shall be well with the righteous.

A RIGHTEOUS man *believes* what God has revealed, and *obeys* what God has commanded.

It shall be well with the righteous *in this world.* Outward circumstances may be unpromising; but the inward state of the mind is *well.* When death approaches, all is well. Their work is done, and they lie down in peace. God is with them, and they fear no evil. Holy angels stand around their bed, and wait to conduct them to their Father's house. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Ps. cxvi. 15. O, the calmness, the sweetness of dying saints! They would not exchange their situation with the proudest monarch on earth. The world has nothing to court their stay: Heaven has everything that their souls desire.

But it shall be well with the righteous *in the world to come. They shall eat the fruit of their doings.*

Look forward, ye righteous, with joyful hope! You may sow in tears, but ye shall reap in joy. You may go forth sorrowing, but ye shall return rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you. Think

nothing of your toils, and pains, and labors. Heaven will recompense the just. Only be faithful to the end. Turn not aside from the holy commandment. Prize your present privileges; and prize your future hopes. Never exchange them for anything that this world can give. If it were to give you all it has, you would be infinite losers by the exchange. You would exchange solid happiness for vanity and disappointment; and you would exchange a heaven of glory for a hell of pain and shame!

THE INEVITABLE DEPARTURE.

BY THE REV. RICHARD PENROSE.

Text: 2 TIM. iv. 6, 7.

MAN is placed in this world for a limited existence, and with the breath of the infant begins the race towards dissolution, when the soul takes its departure from the body, and on the works of this life depend his state throughout eternity.

Work and its object.

1. The language used by the Apostle Paul to Timothy must be observed by every child of God; it implies work being done faithfully for the accomplishment of one great object, viz., the soul's salvation.

Work continued.

2. There is no time for loitering in the great arena of this probation. Ever onward! must be the watchword in the trying conflict. The work of yesterday requires repeating day by day, that there may be a growth of grace in our own souls and the souls of our fellow-men.

> "He that watereth shall be watered,
> He that winneth souls is wise."

This life is a warfare. The soldier of the cross must be ever ready for the onslaught, and to be offered as a sacrifice to Him who died for us. With unwavering devotion to the Great Captain of our salvation, he follows his leader through the straight and narrow paths that terminate in Heaven.

Work finished.

3. When the cares of this life are at an end, when the sighings of an overburdened heart are stilled, and the tear of the weeper is dried; when the anguish of the suffering body has passed, and the soul, released from its incarnate prison, has entered another world, where we can follow it only in imagination, but where we also must enter the portals that admit us to the presence of our Creator, there to receive the reward of our work.

"*Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*"

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.—2 COR. v. 1–4.

I. The Christian views of life.

1. *Life is a pilgrimage.*

TEXT speaks of "tabernacles," tents; we are dwelling in tents. The idea is taken from Eastern travelers, who, when they had to perform any long journey, had to provide themselves with tents, which became their residence until their journey was closed.

This representation of life is found in heathen sages and poets. But the Christian view is peculiar: men are on a pilgrimage to another world: there are but two roads through life; the one leads to death, and the other to eternal felicity. And every man is traveling on one of these roads or the other.

Your great business is to examine the road you are taking.

2. *Life is uncertain.*—What is more frail than a tent? Subject to earthly decay, liable to be wrecked by accident, or to be overturned by the storm—a fit emblem of the frailty of our bodies.

The tent may be repaired or replaced; but the moment our tabernacle falls, our journey is at an end: we are in one moment in that condition which can never change (Matt. xxiv. 42).

3. *Life is a time of trouble and affliction.*—"We in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." Many a sentimentalist, both ancient and modern, has dwelt on the dark shades of life. But the apostle, although he allows that there are afflictions and sorrows, sufficient in number and weight to make even the true believer "groan, being burdened," allows of no depression but what is consistent with solid and substantial and habitual rejoicing in God.

Mark the difference between the afflictions of worldly men and the afflictions of true believers—that the latter are connected with eternal life, and are the instruments by which they are prepared for it; whilst the other are the corrections of God, which are not turned to any moral use, through the perverted feelings and principles of men.

4. *Life is to be subordinated to one great end—so to please God as to have the testimony that we are accepted.* This is not only a noble conception, it is a great and glorious reality, that every believer may regard everything in life, whether it be pleasing or painful, as subordinated to the great end of obtaining the Divine approbation, and being accepted of God. The highest heaven of a good

man is to be accepted of God. And it is only when we have the blessed assurance that through Christ we are accepted, that we enter into the spirit of true Christianity. Then we are living in a state of true and solid happiness which none of the changes of the present life can destroy.

II. **The Christian view of death.** The apostle does not dwell on the circumstances of dying. Opens a new view of death by one word "unclothed." Death is the "unclothing" of the soul.

When the tent falls, the traveler lives; when the tabernacle of the body is dissolved, the traveler within, the spirit, still lives, and is but "unclothed." There is no more connection between the destruction of our consciousness and death, than between the destruction of the tent in which the traveler has lived and the alteration or destruction of his consciousness, or the interruption of his rational faculties (compare the parable of the rich man and Lazarus). Unclothing of the spirit introduces it only into a state in which its powers become more active and complete.

Everything in the body which obstructs the operation of the mind is removed.

There is change of place as well as condition. The connection of our spirits with the body renders us inhabitants of the earth. The moment that is broken, we are no longer inhabitants of earth, but of some other place.

We become conscious, by virtue of this unclothing, of the presence of those spirits who have undergone the same process before us. If we die without a preparation for a better world, we become, in a moment, conscious of the presence of the innumerable wicked. If we die in the Lord, this unclothing makes us at once conscious of the presence of all the righteous, and of the presence of God Himself.

III. **The Christian view of the future permanent state of believers.** Doctrine of the resurrection of the body given up by wise men of antiquity. The wisdom of the world concluded that it was impossible that God should raise the dead. Doctrine of the union of the soul with matter. They planted evil in the body—there they mistook it; the seeds of evil are in the soul. To them it was undesirable that the body should be raised again; and the doctrine of the resurrection was scoffed at. Christian view is, not that there is any evil in connecting the soul with matter, but a great good, when that matter is refined—when that change passes upon it which is promised at the resurrection of the dead, which shall be glorious. This was the hope of the saints in all ages. The doctrine which our Lord took such pains to teach. St. Paul accounted all things as nothing if he might attain the resurrection of the dead (Phil. iii. 8–11).

The apostle desires to be clothed—"earnestly

desiring" "with our house," in contrast with the "tabernacle" in which we now groan.

He aims at the most perfect state of man—a glorified spirit, and a glorified body, impersonated with the second Person of the Trinity.

THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY OVER DEATH.

BY THE REV. H. B. BASCOM.

And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, There shall be no more death.—REV. xxi. 3, 4.

The text assumes that death is an evil, and the assumption is authenticated by the universal experience of all men in all time. Death is indeed an evil—an adverse destiny—with which every child of humanity has to grapple, sooner or later. Death is one of the great facts of our being—a law of our nature; and, however solemn may be the thought or gloomy the reflection, it must, with every one of us, come to this, even this, at last. Heaven has interposed no alternative, and we must, despite all hope or fear to the contrary, indulge the fearful conception and surrender ourselves to its appalling nature.

The subject is one of such thrilling and overwhelming interest, we know not how to approach it. With regard to the mere fact, we are without doubt or hope; and yet how strangely does feel-

ing lead us to inquire even where conviction affirms!

Is it—we cannot help asking—is it true of man and earth, that death is the dark and inevitable lot of all—that it is not only a doom the past has braved, but as certainly one that the future shall: that all, all must die—must sink in death nor leave survivor nor heir to the wide inheritance of earth? Is it true that the quiver of death is not emptied nor his bow unstrung—that even the living are but stragglers from his fold, a fold already embracing the unreckoned millions of dead mankind? Is it true that generation after generation is found successfully placing, by unerring transmission, the keys of the tomb in his proud and conquering hand! Must it be felt at every step, that we live in the shadow of the future—that to-morrow walks in the guise of day, and that life itself is but the journal of death! Are we, at best, but mourners in the funeral train, and does death, like the personified Calamity of Homer, tread our wasting hearts, while no sound is heard from his footsteps!

If these things are so, and every trial of doubt is but to find them true, what must not be the appalling fear and transcendent hopes they bring into play. Here is a subject involving, not the interests of personal consequence, or the destinies of civilization—not the tenure of earthly good, or the dreams and blazonry of human ambition, but

the fundamental laws and wants—the essential elements and issues—the most interior and touching relations—the eternal allotments of humanity! Such is the subject, and such our relations to it.

If, then, **the ordinary scenes and interests of life's drama fail to turn our attention to the future, its catastrophe cannot.** If the mirth and madness—the tears and triumph—the holiday of youth and the apathy of age—pride of intellect and prostrated purposes—pomp and poverty—rapture and anguish—so strangely mingled in our path, do not teach us the moral of our being; then we turn to death—we appeal to the tomb—to the urned ashes of the friends we have lost—to the lesson of buried centuries, and the dead dust of ages!

Do you ask after the purpose of the appeal? it is, that we may point you to that part of your natural inheritance of which death cannot deprive you, the heirship of an imperishable destiny, when mortality and the grave shall be recalled but as parts of the history, and among the antiquities of a former state of existence, occupied as a theater of action and responsibility.

In this way, Christianity in theory, and religious feeling in fact, exhibit a happy admixture of counteracting elements—one while burdened with sighs and tears, and then rising and swelling in the loftiest strains of celestial triumph. And, with these, the one not less than the other, we

have to do on the present occasion: "And I heard a voice out of Heaven, saying, There shall be no more death!"

In asking attention to the significance and application of this very interesting announcement,

We shall, **First, notice the original, relative condition and destination of man.** After that God had created the heavens and the earth—had given to the one their grandeur and the other its beauty—he proceeded to the creation of man. But, as man was to hold so distinguished a rank in the dignified scale of his unequal workmanship, in the wide range of being, action, and destiny, Infinite Wisdom paused to deliberate, and the Eternal Three proceed to his formation in council; "Let us make man in our own image and after our own likeness."

From the circumstances and manner of his creation, we infer, that man was destined to be chief of the works of God. Uniting in himself, alike, the nameless diversities of mind and the endless modifications of matter, he is, perhaps, altogether the most surprising effect of creating power—of omniscient skill; and, combining in himself the most remarkable phenomena, and occupying, as he does, a position in the center and admit the harmonies of the universe, man may be regarded as a living type of the worlds of matter and of mind.

At the time of his first introduction amid the

enchanting scenes of a new-created world, man was constituted the high priest of God's creation surrounding him—the herald of His being and perfections. The multiplied phenomena attendant upon his original formation as a compound being, consisting of soul and body, stamped upon him the signature of his value, and proclaimed his title to pre-eminence amid the universality of things about him.

Placed, in his primitive state, at the head of God's visible creation—intellectual, immortal man went forth in the image of his Maker, the legal representative of heaven and earth, the lord and proprietor of all he surveyed. His soul a simple, immaterial, uncompounded principle of life—derived by direct creative impartation from God Himself, and intended for immortality—was naturally and necessarily indestructible; and any tendency to decay, that may have attached to the constituent parts of different elementary tendencies of which his body was composed, may, and, it occurs to us, must, have been counteracted by the special provision which had been made for the perpetuity of the organic division of his being, upon condition of obedience and fidelity to the God of his existence and blessings.

Second, the tendency of his material organization to decay. It being philosophically certain that the different ultimate constituents of which his body was compounded would, by the law of

affinity, seek their primitive abodes in the elements from which they were originally taken: it is probable, we say, this tendency was counteracted, not only by a well-known law of the vital functions in the case, but by the specific influence of the *Tree of Life*—so denominated because of its self-perpetuating, its death-preventing properties, and to which man had free access, exclusively in view of the continuity of his being as a denizen of earth.

THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

BY THE REV. URIJAH R. THOMAS.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, said the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.—REV. xiv. 13.

HOW much light dwells in this familiar sentence! How many truths gleam from it—gleam with all the varied beauty of the stones in the breast-plate of the Hebrew priest of old! We have here:—

I. **The Divine care for the bereaved.** "I heard a voice from heaven" . . . "Saith the Spirit." The apostle was evidently thinking—a vision was passing before him that made the thought very vivid, of the persecution of the martyrs even unto death, and of the terrible havoc that the sharp sickle of death would work through the ages.

While he is thinking of the death that would thus befall men, he is led to contemplate the voice and the writing of consolation. These come from heaven. Heaven cares for earth in its bitterest experiences. The Bible is full of this doctrine. So we often rightly sing Faber's lines—

> "There is no place where earth's sorrows
> Are more felt than up in heaven."

II. **A Divine revelation about the holy dead.** Mary's cry about her Lord, and our Lord, is more common than we may imagine. We are often really saying to the earth, to the elements, to the winds, about our departed beloved or great ones, "If ye have borne him away, tell me where ye have laid him." Where are our dead? We are not left to our speculations, not left to believe only that our yearnings and our instincts must be fulfilled; but there is a definite and accurate revelation about the holy dead. Here we have: —

III. **The sacred relationship of the holy dead.** They "die in the Lord." They die, not merely believing in His teaching, not merely breathing His Spirit, but they die sustained by His grace, and preserved by His power. The fellowship that Christly men had with Christ in their lifetime is not weakened or shaken by any of the mysterious experiences of death. Death rather intensifies and completes it. Here we have:—

IV. **The celestial blessedness of the holy dead.** That close relationship with Christ, in dying, has

led to this fuller development of their blessedness. "Blessed are the dead." They are not to be thought of as those who have been overborne by some great adversary, and trampled down by some resistless foe. They are to be regarded as conquerors. That "rest!" What can it mean? It does not mean, evidently, that they are gone out of being; for non-existence is not rest.

Death is not the end of the spirit-life. It is resting, not annihilated—resting, for it has returned to God who gave it. This repose is not a lapsing into some stagnant, weird inactivity. For it is equally true of those who are said to rest from their labors that "they rest not day nor night." These words cannot mean that we cease to think—cease to feel—cease to work after death. They indicate, surely, the fulness of life—the harmony of life—the complete satisfaction of life. They who have gone to heaven partake of this rest—the rest of Christ—the rest of God. You remember the striking simile used by Robertson of Brighton, when he tells us that "the symbols in the world of nature of this rest, are not the lake locked in ice, but the strong river moving on calmly and rapidly in silent majesty and strength, —not the cattle lying in the sun, but the eagle cleaving the air with fixed pinions, and giving you the idea of repose combined with strength and motion." Here we have—

V. **The undying influence of the holy dead.**

Dear to them was many a project and plan born of love to Christ; very dear some endeavors into which, in loving fellowship with others, they threw unreservedly their strength of body, and intellect, and heart. For their sake, as well as for our own and for Christ's, we rejoice to know that the seed they buried will spring up in rich harvests, that the sacred tones of their teachings will swell into growing harmonies—that the forces they set at work, however subtle and silent, will widen in influence and develop and multiply till myriads are affected by the life-work of one man. Lasting power for good is here described as the legacy to the world, not only of our reformers and authors and preachers, but of all whose Christly lives ended in a Christly death, and whose very death even, like their Lord's, was necessary to their deeper and wider and more sacred usefulness. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

THE BLESSEDNESS OF WISDOM.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, etc., etc.—PROV. iii. 13, 18.

THESE words catalogue the blessings that accrue to a godly life. This godliness or wisdom—

I. **Endows with the best wealth.**—It is here represented as better than "silver," "fine gold,"

"precious rubies," or all things that can be desired. What are the greatest temporal possessions in comparison with a God-loving soul?

1 *The former cannot be really enjoyed without the latter.* A corrupt soul cannot really enjoy the world.

2. *The former has a very transitory existence compared with the latter.* The temporal is transitory in itself, and is ever rapidly passing from the grasp of its possessor. "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

3. *The former is not essential to the blessedness of the latter.* A godly soul can be happy in a pauper's home. The Lord is its portion. "What things were gain to me," says the apostle, "those I counted loss."

II. **It contributes to the prolongation of life.** "Length of days is in her hand." This has been illustrated in a preceding sketch.

III. **It secures happiness in all departments of life.** "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Her ways are the ways of chastity, justice, truthfulness, holy affections, benevolent activities, and communings with the Great God. From these, pleasures must inevitably spring. Religion is happiness. It has a "rest for the soul" (Matt. xi. 29). It has a "fulness of joy" (Ps. xvi. 11). It has a sublime happiness even in temporal affliction (2 Cor. vi. 10; 1 Peter, i. 3).

IV. It restores to all forfeited privileges. "She is a tree of life," etc. Adam by sin forfeited the privileges of the tree of life. Who can tell the virtues that were in connection with that tree! Would he ever have suffered or died? Would he not have grown in power and honor forever? True godliness is a tree of life, a tree of life in the soul. Like the Apocalyptic tree, it is in the midst of the street of the New Jerusalem, on either side of the river, yielding twelve manner of fruits, and the leaves of it are for healing of the nations. This tree of life was—(1) *Central.* "In the midst." Godliness is in the center of man's nature. This tree of life was—(2) *Well-rooted.* "Side of the river." A religious soul is a soul rooted by the stream of Divine love and truth. This tree of life was—(3) *Fruitful.* "Twelve manner of fruits." It affords every variety of pleasure, meets every taste and want. This tree of life was—(4) *Restorative.* "Leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations." It restores waning faculties, renews decaying powers.

CHRIST THE REFINER.

And he shall sit as a refiner.—MATT. iii. 3.

CHRIST is obviously intended in this prophecy, and it quite accords with the apostle's description of the end of Christ's coming: "Who gave Himself that He might redeem us from all

iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. ii. 14). Christ's refining is the purifying of His people, the removal of all dross and alloy, and imparting unto them those holy qualities which will render them fit for the most honorable purposes on earth, and finally meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. The gold of Christ's Church is not pure, until He hath sat, and brought it through the refining process.

I. **How then does He do this, in what way does He act as the refiner of His people?**

1. *His truth is refining.* The words of His mouth are pure words, and they enlighten the eyes, and exert a cleansing power over the heart and life. Hence He prayed to His Father, and said, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth."

2. *His Spirit is refining.* Hence that blessed agent is called the Holy Spirit, not only because He is essentially holy, but also because all holiness is the result of His influences. The Spirit refines by leading the mind into all truth, and by applying the blood of Jesus to the conscience, which cleanseth from all sin. Hence in reference both to the truth and the Spirit conjointly, the apostle says, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit" (1 Pet. i. 22).

3. *Christ refines by affliction.* He brings His people into the furnace, and by causing

them to pass through the fires, He makes them to lose the dross and tin of sin. He himself is said to have been made perfect through sufferings, and though no chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous, yet afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby. It is by afflictions that many of the graces are matured, and that the soul is conformed to the suffering Redeemer. Hence it is written, "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed." And again, "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

II. **The qualifications of Christ as a refiner.** As the refiner, Christ possesses every qualification necessary for the work.

1. *His skill is infinite.* He knows the nature of His materials. What they should lose, in what they are deficient, and what is requisite for their complete salvation.

2. *Then His experience is extensive.* He has suffered, and knows the nature of every variety of affliction to which we are exposed. Poverty, reproach, tribulation, anguish, and death itself, were all endured by Himself.

3. *Then His tenderness is unbounded.* He not only knows the true nature of our sorrows, but He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmi-

ties." The attack of Saul upon the primitive Christians was felt by Jesus, when He said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" His tenderness being such, He will not allow our sufferings to be injurious, nor our temptations to be stronger than we are able to bear, nor will He ever leave us to the scorching influences of the fires, but when we are tried bring us forth as gold. It is said, "He shall *sit* as a refiner;" that is, He shall watch the whole process; He shall heat or cool the furnace as circumstances require, and when he beholdeth the design accomplished, and His own image clearly reflected, He will then bestow the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

THE REST OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God . . . Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.—HEB. iv. 9, 11.

ALL mankind are seeking something in which to repose. The inquiry of every one is, "Who will show us any good?" Most seek it in the world, and seldom find anything save vexation and disappointment. But the Bible reveals One who is willing to bestow a lasting peace. The Saviour says, "Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The rest which Christ bestows in this world is com-

parative. It is more than its recipients once possessed; but it is not complete. It is only the foretaste of a fuller, a perfect rest. To this, the text refers, "There remaineth a rest to the people of God."

The verses suggest three inquiries:—

I. **What is the rest?** One very common notion of it is that it is an entire cessation from labor. To those who have been toiling all their lives, this is the prominent idea that it presents to the mind. But it is something more than this. The word translated "rest" certainly does denote a keeping of Sabbath. It is not a state of mere repose. As the Sabbath, a time set apart for God, brings its duties, the noblest man can engage in on earth, so will this eternal Sabbath. The Sabbath among the Jews was peculiarly sacred. No secular work was allowed to be done on it. Toil was not permitted to profane it. The decalogue even forbade the use of the inferior animals, so that it might be a time of rest both for man and beasts. It was a day devoted exclusively to the Lord. So will this be. It will be a greater, because a perfect rest. The rest of God from the work of creation, the rest of man from worldly labor—these were foreshadowings and pledges of the eternal rest. In what will it peculiarly consist? It will be—

1. *A rest from sin.* It is for those who are purified from all that is evil. The unholy can-

not possess it. They will not be allowed to partake of it. Nothing shall enter it that defileth, nothing that maketh a lie.

2. *It will be a rest from sorrow.* This often comes to the Christian from the sins of others. When he is removed from these, he will have no more to trouble him. But these blessings are only negative. It consists of what is positive also.

(*a*). It is a bestowment of eternal life. This is the Christian's peculiar privilege. The Gospel it was that brought life and immortality to light.

(*b*) It is being with Christ. Now we see Him but by the eye of faith: then we shall see Him face to face.

(*c*) It is working for God without weariness, and with full powers to do so.

II. **When is the rest?** It is future. It is not a rest in this world. This life is a life of trouble and strife and toil. It is a period of discipline, and stern conflict. In it we work for the future, and upon it the future depends. Like a day of battle it will bring eternal peace, or unending bondage. It is true that this rest begins in this world. It commences with the renewed soul when it first "looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." It brightens upon us more and more as we rise from the lower, the temporal, to the higher, the eternal, life. It is fully revealed to us when we have done

with mortality and sin. Until then we cannot completely enter into, nor enjoy, "the rest that remaineth for the people of God."

III. **For whom is the rest.** They are not all who profess to be the followers of the Saviour. They are a peculiar people. They are those who love holiness, and hate iniquity and sin. Their hearts are set to do right. Though in the world, they are not of the world. It is not for all men, because all will not receive it. They do not wish it. They will not obey God on earth; how could they serve Him in heaven? They hate the shadow of this rest. To some it is a weariness and a grief. They would willingly abolish it from the world. How, then, could they enjoy the substance?

To the Christian, these words are full of hope and holy consolation. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy will come with the morning! The sins of the past may rise up in sorrow before him; but he has a rest that still remains. The world may be, and often is, a land of darkness and of the shadow of death; but he presses forward to a land of righteousness, of life, of light, of God.

To the neglecter of religion, these words convey nothing but despair. There is a rest remaining, but it is not for him. Again and again he has been invited to the Saviour, but he has preferred the things of the world to those of eternity. He

casts realities away for shadows. Therefore he will have no part in this rest.

AFFLICTION.

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction, etc.—PROV. iii. 11, 12.

AFFLICTIONS are to be accepted **as means of spiritual discipline.** "The chastening of the Lord." "His correction." Human suffering in this world, must be regarded,

1. Not as *casualties;* events that come on us by capricious chance or iron necessity. They are from "the Lord." The Lord is in all. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away," etc.

2. Nor as mere *penalties.* It is true that sin is the source of all suffering. But suffering here, in the cases of individuals, is not often the measure, the kind, or degree of the sin. It is *reformative*, not destructive. "The chastening of the Lord." Affliction has obviously a power to *individualize* man. It detaches him from the race and makes him feel his own solemn loneliness. It *spiritualizes* man. It makes him feel how worthless materialism is, and how momentous spirit. It *solemnizes* man. It brings the idea of death, retribution, eternity.

II. Afflictions are to be accepted **as tokens of parental love.** "Whom the Lord loveth." "As a father," etc. The anguish is not caused by the

lash of a tyrant, or the infliction of an inexorable judge, but by the love of a father.

1. *The character of God as a benevolent Being attests this.* It is a monstrous profanity to believe He can have any pleasure in our suffering. He is love.

2. *The experience of the good attests this.* David: "Before I was afflicted I went astray" (Ps. cxix. 67). Paul: "I take pleasure in infirmities" (2 Cor. xii. 8, 10). And the good in all ages.

3. "*The word of God attests this.* "Happy is the man whom God correcteth" (Job. v. 17). "As many as I love I rebuke" (Rev. iii. 19). "And He shall sit as a refiner" (Malachi, iii. 3).

THE VICTORY OVER DEATH.

BY THE REV. W. H. DEAN.

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.—1 COR. xv. 56, 57.

THESE words may be regarded as the summing up of St. Paul's argument concerning the resurrection of the dead. We will follow its thoughts in their order.

I. **The sting of death is sin.** How true that is we all know. If our conscience did not condemn us and thus more or less distinctly give intimation of the judgment awaiting the sinful, death would

have no sting, nothing of that venom which tortures and agonizes the soul in view of death, and that which follows death.

II. **The strength of sin is the law.** Experience soon proves this declaration to be true. That which is unholy in us rises in rebellion against the assertion of God's holiness. Sin is pleasant, because forbidden, and makes that which forbids it, its occasion, its reason, in other words, its strength.

III. **We receive victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

1. Because He proved that sin is not a necessary part of our humanity. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, though He was in all points tempted like as we are. To live as He lived are we exhorted, "because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth (1 Peter ii. 21,22).

2. Because He gave Himself a sacrifice to redeem us from sin.

God made Him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21). He bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness (1 Peter ii. 24). Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and spirit which are God's (1 Cor. vi. 20). Thus does Christ conquer sin in us. Making us perfect in every good work to do His will. If we

sin we repudiate that light and knowledge which enable us to see that the law is holy, and just, and good; and reject that wonderful and matchless love of God, who for us men and for our salvation sent His only begotten Son to live amongst us, so that we might know how to live, to die for us that we might reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. Because Christ was raised from the dead He giveth us the victory over sin and death.

1. In this life we have a supernatural life through the death and resurrection of Christ.

St. Paul says (Col. iii. 1, 2), "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth."

2. We also, if we believe in Him, have the assurance of resurrection unto glory.

Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. He says, "I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." So it is self-evident that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Now every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure. Thus through Christ are we given victory over sin and death.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast in the faith of the resurrection. Unmovable in the assurance that the bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be raised at the last day, always abounding in the work of the Lord by keeping in subjection your bodies to holiness and living a life of faith on the son of God, who loved you, and gave Himself for you.

FUNERAL SERMON.

BY THE REV. S. BARING-GOULD.

Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, for God did send me before you.—GEN. lxv. 5.

INTRODUCTION.

THE brethren of Joseph had wickedly, out of envy, sold their brother into bondage; they had even meditated his death. They had cause to fear when he suddenly revealed himself as first lord of Egypt under Pharaoh, that he would remember the wrong done him, and now that they were in his power, would punish them severely for it. But not so. He says, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." No wonder that his brethren "could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence." But he speedily removes their fear. "Be not grieved," he says, "nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." He looks away from, thrusts aside

their wickedness, and refers all to the overruling providence of God, bringing good out of evil, and making all things work together for good, to the family of His chosen servants, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

I. **And now, in time of bereavement and sorrow, we may, I think, put these words into the mouth of him whom we have lost.** You know how it always is, after a death, those who cling to the dying, parents, or children, reproach themselves bitterly for things they have left undone, or things they have done which it would have been better they had omitted. If the child had only not been taken out on such a cold day, it would not have caught that cold! If such food had not been given the patient, it would not have brought on a relapse! If another medical opinion had only been obtained! if precautions had only been taken earlier! suspicion of danger entertained earlier! What bereavement does not bring thoughts like these into the mind? What anguish does it not leave in these considerations?

"Now therefore," says to you he, whom now, we trust, reposes in Paradise, "be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves,"—the faults were not intentional, there was no lack of love; human blindness, human error must always intervene in human affairs. I reproach you not, "for God did send me before you."

II. **Yes, "God did send me before you,"** a spy into the promised land, to gather its rich clusters of grapes, to go all through its fertile vales, to rest beside its waters of comfort, in its evergreen pastures. I regret not the wilderness, the hot and barren land, the weary road, the rough stones. I am at rest, and tarry for you to come to me. "God did send me before you," did take me from the burden and heat of the day, the God who loved me and loveth you. I have gone "to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God."

OUR RESURRECTION.

BY THE REV. T. P. REVELL.

Shall the dead rise and praise thee?—Ps. lxxxviii. 10.

THE great question of the human heart is, "Shall the dead rise and praise Thee?" or, as Job puts it, "If a man dies, shall he live again?" So every child of humanity ofttimes finds himself thinking on this question. After life here, what then? After death, what? Shall I pass into earth, into unconsciousness and unrecognition forever? Is death the end; or shall I rise again? Shall I live hereafter, shall I know and be known?

I. **Our resurrection is desirable.** Man, everywhere and at all times, has desired to live after

death. There is that in our nature that is not satisfied with the things of this life, but looks beyond to greater joys and happiness. This desire among all men has been given expression to, in the various views and creeds held by the different nations. We desire to live hereafter, because of friendships formed and love enkindled here. These features of life which bring to the soul its chief joys, we would have continued forever. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

II. **Our resurrection is possible.** If we are the result of certain forces in nature, we must be closely allied to nature and capable of its changes and phenomena. Our observation of nature's growth convinces us that its growth is made by certain kinds of deaths and resurrections. The harvest is the result of the dying grain. The natural law of life is death and renewal of life. Our resurrection is possible in God. He who created the body from nothing can renew the body in death. It is possible in Jesus Christ who conquered death and is able to give us the same conquering power. (See 1 Cor. xv. 12–16).

III. **Our resurrection is certain.** We desire it. God is able to raise us from the dead, and God will give us the desire of our hearts. Certain, because God's greatest glory is in man's resurrection; the effect of sin is death. Christ came to destroy the power of sin and death. This car-

be fully accomplished only in man's resurrection; therefore if there be no resurrection then Christ and God have failed. It is certain because Christ has promised it. "I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also." So Paul is confident in proclaiming our resurrection in Christ. (See 1 Cor. xv. 20–22).

Yes, it is certain, for

If dull matter lives forever, why not mind and love so true?
Surely these are things diviner than all else within the blue.
Ever and forever singing, they go on their happy way;
And shall love, God's best reflection, have its part within a day?
All the spheres and all the ages, all the powers in the height
Tell us naught e'er came to ruin save the wrongs that yield to right.
Beauty, pleasure, mirth, and rapture, are they what they seem to be?
Faith and hope and love that figures in our life so constantly;
Surely these will last forever, for we know it should be so,
And what ought to be is certain while the cycles onward go.

The dead shall rise and praise God.

DIVINE COMPASSION.

BY THE REV. W. F. HOOK.

When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her.—LUKE vii. 13.

IT were vain to inquire why human nature requires sympathy; we can only appeal to experience, and we find it to be so. And let the

compassionate see in the conduct of their Lord, and in the perfect example of compassion which He sets before us, how they ought always to act in their compassion for a friend. Though full of the deepest feeling, how calm the blessed Jesus stands before the bier of the young man, the only son of a widowed mother. What we require in a friend is not the mere verbal expression of sympathy, or what the cold world, in complimentary language, calls condolence; but with the sympathy we look also for the advice and suggestions of which we are conscious, our minds being paralyzed the while with grief, that we stand so greatly in need.

II. Grief is not sin. The sin consists only in the excess of grief; and grief is excessive when it incapacitates us for the duties of our station, or leads us to distrust of our God. This in truth is the struggle of human nature, during the threescore years and ten of its trial—to bring the human will into subjection to the divine. The question is not as to the amount of pain and grief which it may cost us to obey; but whether, notwithstanding the pain and grief, we are ready to submit, and from our trust in God's goodness, through faith to acquiesce with thankfulness in the dispensations of Providence, however painful they may prove to be. When God takes away the friend of our bosom, or the child of our affection, He does not call upon us to rejoice; but He simply requires us to be resigned—that is, submis-

sively to yield what God requires of us under the conviction suggested by faith, that it is best that so it should be. There is no sin in praying, "Father, let this cup pass from me," for so prayed our sinless Lord; but there would be sin in failing to say, "Father, not my will, but Thine, be done," when the will of the Father that the cup should not pass from us is declared.

THE MYSTIC STEP.

BY THE REV. T. DUNLOP.

There is but a step between me and death.—1 SAM. xx. 3.

I. **It is a certain step.** All must take it. Settle us in the finest spot in the kingdom of verdure; let the fairest skies smile upon us, and the clearest streams meander by us; let us spend our time watching the flowers in spring, and listening to the bird's song; yet, even then, that step would appear before us: even then death would find us.

II. **It is an uncertain step.** When we must take it we cannot tell. It may be to-night; it may be next week, or next year, or not for many years. When, we know not. Where we must take it, is altogether hid from us. It may be in the street or by the way; it may be in the house, or far away from friends and home. Where, is unknown to us.

III. **It is a final step.** It is final because it puts an end to human distinctions. King and subject, prince and peasant, master and servant. It puts an end to the present character of human duties. The duties of parents and children, etc.

IV. **It is a parting step.** It parts us from this world of matter. We must bid farewell to flower and star. It parts us from friends near and dear to us, leaving them to exclaim :—

> "O for the touch of a vanished hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still."

It parts us from ourselves. That tender union that subsists between soul and body is rudely torn asunder; that body we have looked at so long, nourished and cherished so long, is left behind us when that step is taken.

V. **It is a solitary step.** It is but one. Death is a lonely thing. We must take it all alone without friends. Alas! some take it *all alone without God!*

VI. **It is altogether a solemn step.** The step of birth is solemn. "It is an awful thing to be born," said one, "because we have got into existence, and can never get out of it." The step of prayer is solemn. To bow in prayer before the throne of Him

> "Who holds the universe
> Like a little fading flower,
> That is worn upon His
> Garment for a little hour"

is surely solemn. Not less solemn is the step of death, for it conducts us either downward into an unalterable and eternal hell, or upward into an unalterable and eternal heaven?

Prepare for taking this step. We should all like to get to heaven at last. Then let us not forget, that except we repent and believe in Christ, except we are born again, all our cherished hopes of heaven will vanish like a vision, and leave nothing before us but the blackness of darkness forever.

SAINTS PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH.

"*And pilgrims on the earth.*"—HEB. xi. 13.

THE text relates to believers of Old Testament times, to whose history the apostle had been referring in the previous verses. He had spoken of Abel the first martyr. Of Enoch, who was translated and did not see death. Of Noah, who built the ark for the saving of his house. Of Abraham, who went out, not knowing whither he went. Of Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. He then gives the delightful summary, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." But equally true is it of all the people of God in every age of the world.

This state is the house of the godly man's pilgrimage. To us then do the words equally refer. Let us ascertain,

I. **What is included in the metaphor.**

And,

II. **The qualifications and duties which are involved in it.**

I. **What is included in the metaphor.**

A pilgrim is one without a fixed habitation, and who is journeying through a strange and foreign land. See verses 14, 15.

1. The pilgrim's original home was in the city of destruction.

In this he was born and educated. Here he lived and dwelt. Here he followed the carnal employments of the citizens. In this state he was far from God. Far from peace. Far from safety. He was an alien without God, without Christ, without hope. A child of wrath even as others.

2. His pilgrimage commenced through the influence of the Gospel on his heart.

The truth came unto him. His misery and peril were depicted. His condition of ruin was declared. Escape and instant flight were urged upon him. A better land was revealed. Gospel salvation, including present rest and future glory, were published. Receiving the truth of the Gospel, he abandoned the city of guilt and death, and fled for refuge to the hope set before him.

3. By faith in God's testimony he set his face towards the heavenly Zion.

He believed God, and therefore set his heart to seek

> "A city out of sight,
> A city in the skies."

A city whose builder and founder is God. The city of the new and heavenly Jerusalem. The inheritance of light.

4. As a pilgrim he claims no possession in the country through which he passes.

His good is not here. His affections are placed on high. He lays not up treasures on the earth. He considers all around him as mutable, and therefore he buys as though he bought not, rejoices as though he rejoiced not, etc. He considers the world as the desert in the way to Canaan,—the sea over which he crosses to the shores of glory. His treasure is in heaven, and his heart is there also.

5. As a pilgrim he travels onward towards the city of habitation.

He goes from stage to stage. From experience to experience. From faith to faith. From dawn to day. From infancy to mature years, and on to old age. He advances in knowledge, love, obedience, and holiness, and thus increases in heavenly-mindedness and fitness for the society and services of the celestial Jerusalem. Genuine

religion is progressive—deepening, expanding, and persevering to the end. Consider.

II. **The qualifications and duties involved in it.**

1. A pilgrim's heart.

And that is a renewed heart. One delivered from the love of sin and the world. A new heart. Heavenly nature. One under spiritual attractions, and moved by spiritual influences. Of all qualifications this is first and chief. A man must be born from above, before he will live for it, and seek it.

2. A pilgrim's head.

A knowledge of his way. Of the good old way. The way revealed in the Holy Scriptures. A way written in the luminous words of God. A way trodden by all preceding pilgrims journeying to Zion. Without a clear and full knowledge of this, all would be dubious and perplexed.

3. A pilgrim's spirit.

The spirit which has animated every child of God.

(*a*) Of devotion and direct intercourse with God.

(*b*) Of praise: singing His statutes, and rejoicing in His grace.

(*c*) Of self-denial: sacrificing self, and submitting fully to the will of God.

(*d*) Of faith and hope: believing and trusting in the truth and goodness of the promises of God.

(*e*) Of vigilance to watch against enemies and perils.

(*f*) Of perseverance: holding on his way.

4. A pilgrim's resources.

These are generally of a very humble character. No chariot, or retinue, or luxuries. No ease, or rest, or worldly pleasures. But he must have

(*a*) His *staff* on which to lean. And this is the pledged promise of God, that His own presence shall go with him, and never, never leave him.

(*b*) His provision. Bread and water given him from heaven. The true manna and the streams of salvation. "If any man thirst," "Lord, evermore give us," etc.

(*c*) His houses of entertainment. Places where he can be welcomed to the hospitable board, and chamber of repose. These are the ordinances of religion, and the various social and private means of grace. "The Lord is my shepherd," etc.

(*d*) Suitable raiment, and especially sandals for his journey. "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass," etc. "Feet shod," etc.

Application.

1. How really happy is the Christian pilgrim. His sorrows and crosses will soon be over, and that forever. His present comforts and blessings are rich and numerous.

2. How glorious the end of his journey. The

heavenly Jerusalem. The city of God. World of light, and life, and glory.

3. Urge sinners to set out on this spiritual pilgrimage.

THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER.

"*A good soldier.*"—2 TIM. ii. 3.

THE text is equally applicable to the private Christian, as to the apostle or bishop of Jesus Christ. All disciples are alike engaged in spiritual warfare. All are called to fight the good fight of faith, and to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ Jesus. Martial language is often applied to the servants of God. And true religion involves in it a necessary and continued conflict with sin and the powers of hell. Observe,

I. **The Christian soldier becomes such by a voluntary enlistment into the army of Jesus.** He abandons his former course, and freely and cheerfully surrenders himself by faith to God. He ceases to be an enemy, which he was in his carnal state, in the enmity of his mind. He has felt the evil of opposing the counsel and authority of God. He has been convinced of the folly and infatuated wickedness of fighting against God, and now he accepts of God's gracious offer, and voluntarily engages to war against all evil, and to devote himself fully and forever to the service of the Lord.

II. **The Christian soldier is clothed in the armor of salvation.** This is fully described by the apostle, Eph. vi. 13.

1. It will be seen that the loins are to be girt with truth.

2. The breastplate is to be righteousness.

3. The shoes or sandals, the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Then there is,

4. The shield of faith.

5. The helmet of hope. And the offensive weapon is,

6. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The whole of this armor is to be used in connection with the spirit of incessant prayer. For the apostle adds, "Praying always," etc. Now this is the authorized legitimate armor to the preclusion of all other. No other will secure us from evil, or give us victory over the enemy.

III. **The Christian soldier fights under the standard of the cross.** The cross is that which is the center of attraction to all the soldiers of Jesus. This is that by which the conquests of the Saviour are effected, and His spiritual dominions enlarged. This is the power and wisdom of God to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin; and this is the object of glorying to all the disciples of Christ, "God forbid that I should glory," etc.

IV. **The Christian soldier is commanded by Jesus, the Captain of salvation.** Christ is emphatically styled the "Captain of their salvation."

Heb. ii. 10. He has gone before His followers, and overcome in their nature all our foes, and was made perfect through suffering. He leads and commands all the spiritual army of God. He was beheld by John as seated on a white horse, having a bow and crown given unto Him, and going forth conquering and to conquer, Rev. vi. 2. As their captain Jesus possesses every qualification to encourage His troops, and to head them in all their conflicts, until they have finished their course, and "fought the good fight." He has given express orders, and specific directions, for infallibly ensuring success to all who fight under His banner. He is their captain and commander to the exclusion of every other. He is infinitely wise,—undauntedly courageous,—invincibly strong,—compassionately tender, — inviolably faithful, — and ever victorious.

V. **The Christian soldier has to wage war with many enemies.** He has to wrestle with flesh and blood; to overcome the evils of his own nature, —the unsubdued corruptions of his own heart. Within are fears, and doubts, and unbelief, much ignorance, self, pride, etc. These must be subdued. All slain. Flesh mortified. Spirit have the ascendency and reign. There are also *foes without*,—the *world*, in all its evils and opposedness to God. With these are leagued the *powers of hell*,—Satan and the legions of darkness. With these enemies there is manifest kindredness and

combination. United they are formidable and dangerous. To wage uncompromising war, and overcome them, is the duty and end contemplated by the soldier of Christ. After all, for the Christian's encouragement, they are represented as being subject to God's controlling power, finite, of limited means of evil, and have, in myriads of instances, been triumphantly vanquished by the soldiers of Christ.

VI. **The Christian soldier must fight and be faithful unto death.** His campaigns will extend through life, and the last enemy he must conflict is death. His martial toils must be patiently and meekly borne, and his defensive and offensive fighting maintained, until he tramples on the neck of the king of terrors and exclaims, "Thanks be to God, who giveth me the victory," etc.

VII. **The Christian soldier shall receive a glorious and eternal reward.** Having suffered with Christ, they shall be "glorified together," Rom. viii. 17. Having overcome they shall have dominion, Rev. ii. 26; be clothed in white raiment, Rev. iii. 5; sit with Christ on His throne, Rev. iii. 21; eat the hidden manna, Rev. ii. 17; and receive from Christ's hands the crown of eternal life, Rev. ii. 10.

"Servant of God, well done!
Thy glorious warfare's past;
The battle's fought, the race is won
And thou art crowned at last."

HAGAR SEEN OF GOD.

BY THE REV. J. EDMONDSON.

Thou God seest me. GENESIS xvi. 13.

I. Several important truths are suggested. AMONGST other truths suggested by this passage, are the following: That God is present in every place; that there is a watchful Providence over men; that all the affairs of men are fully known to God; and that God is amazingly condescending.

II. We should often apply this passage to ourselves. When we are engaged in *religious duties*, let us recollect that we are *seen of God.*

In all our *worldly concerns*, we should apply this passage to ourselves. The duties of life may call us forth to labor with our hands, to buy and sell, to plant and build, to sow and reap, to mix with company of almost every description; but in every employment, and in every company, seriously remember, "Thou God seest me."

If *adversity* be our lot, let us not forget that *God sees us.*

In our *prosperity* we are *seen of God.*

Wherever we go, let us still apply this solemn truth, "Thou God seest me." Pious men like David, should frequently address God in such language as this: "Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but,

lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me." Thus, while we remember God, all is well with us.

III. **Much good will result from this practise.** A deep sense of God's presence will lead us to a *circumspect* walk.

This will prove a source of consolation in affliction. How supporting in affliction is the presence of that God, who pities and relieves the distressed and afflicted! Our fellow-creatures may not see our afflictions; or, if they do, they may neither pity nor relieve us. Think, then, when thy spirit is bowed down with grief, and when wearisome days and nights are appointed unto thee, "Thou God seest me." God knows how much thou canst bear; what support is necessary; and when thou shouldest be delivered. Commit thyself to Him, and leave all thy affairs in His hands. He looks upon thee, that He may do thee good. When we intend to relieve an indigent man, we look upon him; but when we have no such intention, we turn our face away. God might hide His face, and leave us in distress, but, after all our crimes, He looks with kind compassion.

The presence of God will reconcile us to trying *providences*. What does it signify how much, or in what way we suffer, if God see us? Come what will, we are prepared, and every providential

occurrence is overruled for our good. We dread solitary affliction; but we love to have friends about us in a trying hour. Well, we may be confident that whatever afflictions take place, we shall not be left alone. In every future period, a good man will be able to say, what he says now, "Thou God seest me."

Under these impressions, we shall cultivate holy *tempers*. We dare not suffer either unholy passions to burn, or malice to take root in our hearts, while we recollect that God sees us. We dare not indulge vain thoughts, we dare not murmur, we dare not be light and trifling, while we think upon this passage, "Thou God seest me."

An application of this truth will help our devotions. God is not *far off* when we pray. He beholds the bended knee, the uplifted eye, and the rising desire. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers" (1 Pet. iii 12). Jesus pleads, and, through him, God is attentive when we pray! O, persevere in this duty, and never forget, "Thou God seest me." To Him be glory forever. *Amen.*

THE HEAVENLY MANSIONS.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.—JOHN xiv. 2.

I. **The scene of the "many mansions."** In my Father's House.

This description conveys the idea.

1. *Of Locality.* Where this house is, no one can say. But it must be where God is. Though He fills all places; though the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, yet in the boundless universe there is one peculiar, appropriate, and magnificent place which He has allotted for Himself, His attendants and saints, to dwell in forever.

That heaven is a *place* appears certain; because it is destined to receive into its capacious mansions at the last day, the glorified material bodies of all the saints; and even now that of Christ, and those of Enoch, Moses, and Elias, are there.

Heaven has been too much considered as a *state* only, and not as a *place;* and thus it has lost much of the interest which it would have otherwise created in the mind. It is true that heaven derives its attractive influence from its being a *state* of happiness; for what is *place*, even the most beautiful, when the mind is unhappy?

2. *The idea of grandeur.* "My Father's house." The house of Deity. How magnificent must that house be which is the residence of the infinite

Creator and Governor of all worlds—the Head of a boundless universe!

3. *The language conveys the idea of home.* "My Father's house" suggests this idea. From that house He came, and for a season sojourned in this world of sorrow. He therefore left His home, but having finished His work, was about to return.

II. **The nature and excellency of the mansions.** This representation of heaven implies,

1. *Ample accommodation.* "Many mansions."

2. *Variety.* "*Many mansions.*" The sources of felicity will be numerous and diverse.

3. Therefore the heavenly mansions will be *infinitely felicitous and adapted to sanctified souls.* This is evident from what has already been stated:—the locality—the grandeur, etc.

4. *Mansions of stability.* Not like a tent or tabernacle, always changing places.

5. *Mansions of eternal permanency.* "Mansions," in the original means to remain, to continue, or *abiding places*,—called in another place, "everlasting habitations."

INHERITANCE OF SAINTS.

Inherit the promises. HEB. vi. 12.

I. **The present Inheritance of departed saints.** "*They inherit the promises.*" This is a conclusive proof of the *immediate* happiness of believers after death. The apostle refers to the happiness of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Job, and all others who lived by faith in the promises of God, and especially in the promises of salvation by Christ, and patiently waited, labored, and suffered in the obedience of faith, and in consequence were at the time the apostle wrote the words, inheriting the promises of God respecting their final and everlasting salvation. "Absent from the body, they were present with the Lord."

1. *Promises the departed saint inherit in this* world—promises suited to their every circumstance, and which the love and faithfulness of their God fulfilled—promises which cheered them on to death, and supported them in their dying moments.—But the principal, the most glorious promises respected heaven, their rest, the scene of ecstatic enjoyment. These promises induced them "to desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one," and now they possess it.

II. **Did these promises speak of "an entrance, into heaven?"** It has been abundantly ministered unto them. They are in full possession of it. They have entered the glorious city, and are sat down with Christ on His throne.

1. Did the *promises speak of freedom from sin?* They have left all their depravity behind them, and they sin no more (Rev. xxi. 27).

2. *Of exemption from sorrow and death?* "God has wiped away all tears from their eyes," etc. (Rev. xxi. 4).

3. *Of blessed championship?* "They are come to God the judge of all," etc. (Heb. xxi. 22, etc.)

4. *Of mutual recognition?* They sit down with Abraham, etc.—they meet and know their brethren in the Lord.

5. *Of delightful vision?* They "see God, and are like Him" (1 John iii. 2).—In short, their warfare is finished—they have crossed earth's desert—the voyage of life is over—They are now "forever with the Lord"—"they shall reign forever and ever."

FADING AWAY.

BY DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

We all do fade as a leaf.—ISAIAH lxiv. 6.

HUMAN life, like nature, has its seasons. Childhood and youth are the spring of life. Manhood is the summer. Declination is the autumn. There is a period when, life having reached its full maturity, decay sets in. The cold wind has touched its heart, chilled the blood and slackened the circulation. The summit is reached, and the path is downward now. The leaf becomes more and more sere and withered:

at length it falls, and the tree stands naked, awaiting the cold blasts of winter. Old age is that winter:—Withered, cold, desolate.

This is the emblem of our life: not of life in any particular stage, or sphere, or clime, but of all life. "We *all* do fade as a leaf." It would be easy to multiply analogies between *autumn* and our mortal life, between the fading of the leaf and the decay of these mortal bodies. Let us notice a few:—

I. **The leaf fades by a necessary law.** There is no power that can keep the foliage on the tree. The leaf must fall. So we must decay. "It is appointed for all men once to die." "All flesh is as grass," etc. Man may and does dread death; he may and does seek to prolong life; but he cannot by any invention or art counteract that resistless law of decay that has swept all past generations to the dust, and that is, day after day, and hour after hour, working out his dissolution.

II. **The leaf fades by a gradual process.** The trees are not stripped by one blast. The rich clouds of foliage do not descend in one shower, leaving nature which was full of life and beauty one moment, a miserable wretch, a mighty grave the next. No! gradually the work of decay goes on. It is so with human life. Except in cases of famine, pestilence, and war, when men are cut down suddenly and in great numbers, the work goes on by degrees.

III. **The leaf fades into its primitive elements.** Take a leaf, in its perfection, into your hand. How symmetrical its form, how lovely its hue, how exquisite its structure. Look at it through a microscope, how delicate its fibers, how fine its lines. How infinitely in its structure does it transcend all human invention. But that leaf is only *organized dust.* It falls and to dust it returns. So it is with man.

IV. **The leaf fades as preparatory to a new life.** The leaf falls, but its place is soon supplied. It falls, in fact, because the new life, rising from the root, has pushed it off. A few months at most and others will appear, as lovely as any that have ever adorned the tree. The loss is not great, the forest will not miss the fallen leaf. So with us. We die, but others will step into our place, and the world will go on. The race will carry on its governments, its commerce, its literature, its religion, without our help. It may require our death, make our very death serve its interests. Let us then not be proud of our position.

V. **The leaf fades as a progressive stage of life.** The tree from which the leaf fell is not dead. Its root are in the soil and full of life. It threw off the sere leaf to put on another and lovelier garment. As the vitality of the tree continues when the leaf falls, the life of man will remain when the body dies. Yes, and like the tree,

that life will dress itself in another garb. As the throwing away of the leaf is but a stage in the tree's progressive life, so the death of the body is but a stage in the outward life of man. Now I would call your attention to four states of mind existing in relation to this fact, one of which must be yours:—

First. *Unreasoning indifference.* The great mass of mankind are stolidly indifferent. Although the certainty of death is unquestionable, they "deem all men mortal but themselves." Why is this? It is not for the want of mementoes. Wherever I go I am reminded of man's mortality. Everywhere without, and within too, there are mementoes that "we all do fade as a leaf." Yet men are indifferent to the fact. Is it rational, I ask, for men to be indifferent to such a fact, to an event that terminates all their relations with the world? No, it is blind stupidity. "Oh that men were wise, that they would consider their latter end!"

Secondly. *Intellectual stoicism.* There are some who look at death as the end of existence. It is but nature, say they, breaking up the organization which it at first molded with its plastic hand. All ends in the grave. He who descends into that land of darkness, will never have a thought, feel a sensation, or perform an action again. The spark is quenched forever. Man is reduced to eternal nothingness. Is this a state

of mind you would choose to entertain concerning death? Infidels recommend this state as a rest to the mind. But if a rest, how difficult to reach? It must be done, by quenching our aspirations for another life and destroying our nature's panting for immortality. It must be done, by condemning the pious of all ages as fanatics and enthusiasts; the Bible, that has been held as divine by the greatest intellects of all times, as a cunningly devised fable. It must be done, by reasoning down reason into folly, mind into matter, God into nature. How few can do this; and when they do it, have they rest? I trow not.

Thirdly. *Terrible foreboding.* There are some fearfully alarmed at the idea of death; "all their life subject to bondage" from its fear. They are conscious of what death will do for them. It will take them from their property, house, friendships, all the sources of their joy, and hasten them into an eternity for which they are unprepared. Any intimation of dying fills them with terror. Is this a desirable state of mind?

Fourthly. *Christian composure.* There are some who are enabled to look at death with calm and tranquil spirits. They are not distressed at the fading of the leaf; its fall does not alarm them. They can say in relation to the body, Let it fall; though I value it as the organ of the soul, though I am thankful for the impressions it has conveyed to me, helping to the training of my intellect and

culture of my heart, still let it fall. Let it fall, either in the vivacity of youth, the vigor of manhood, or the frailties of age; "for I know that when the earthly house of this my tabernacle is dissolved, I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Which of these states of mind, my brother, in relation to our approaching mortality is the rational one? I need not ask which is the happiest one, that is obvious. Which will you adopt?

DEATH OF A DAUGHTER.

BY D. C. EDDY, D.D.

The destruction that wasteth at noonday.—DAVID.

DEATH, viewed without reference to the victory of faith, is a terrible enemy. He is the common conqueror of mankind. The more we see of his dreadful dealings with our race, the more do we dread his approach and shun his presence. Merciless alike to tender youth and hoary age, he has filled society with lamentations, and clothed many a mourner in robes of sorrow. He has no pity for the widow—none for the orphan. His vocation is terrible destruction, and like a conqueror he rideth through the world, leaving his pathway wet with tears and dotted with graves. Each time he comes, it seems to be

with the same relentless fury, dealing out to man the cup of bitterness and sorrow. He has no pity. Mothers have knelt before him, and plead for their children in vain; sisters have bowed at his iron throne, and with tearful eyes besought him to revoke the mandate which consigned a brother to the grave, in vain; whole churches, whole nations have been unable to soften his heart of steel, or move him to one deed of mercy and compassion. Other conquerors have lived awhile and died. Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon, are all slumbering in their graves. For a short time their banners waved over defeated armies and prostrate empires. Victory followed them awhile, and gathered its cluster of blood-wet laurels around their heads. But the time of triumph was short. Soon they left the ranks of living men and joined the silent army of the dead. Music, soft and melodious—the solemn dirge, sounded over their graves, but they heard it not. Their dust has mingled with the meaner ashes of beggars and slaves. But death is not yet destroyed. Unlike human tyrants, he holds his sway from age to age, and the monuments of his conquests are found through all the progress of six thousand years. He entered with sacrilegious tread the garden of Eden, and following close in the track of human sin, marked our first parents as his victims. He has entered into a contest with the mightiest of our race. Patriarchs, prophets, kings

he has consigned to the shades of the sepulcher. In all forms, and under all circumstances, he has made his conquests. At midnight and midnoon he has invaded the cottage and the palace, and presented himself to the monarch and the subject. He desired to grapple with the Son of God, and on the summit of Calvary wrestled with that Mighty One, who came to abolish death, and seal up forever the mouth of the sepulcher, and destroy entirely the dominion and conquest of the grave.

Death does not come in the same form to all men. He varies his assaults, and to some appears under more awful circumstances than to others.

To others death comes in the wasting, lingering consumption, and gives them days and months of weariness and sorrow. By most persons the consumption is dreaded as one of the most fearful diseases to which we are subject. It is called the scourge of our climate, and every year it carries hundreds to the grave. Not a few brave the fever, who tremble at the signs of this protracted disease, which is so prevalent in our community. Fathers and mothers fear other complaints but little, and look with the utmost anxiety upon the wasting cheeks and the pallid countenances of their children. But, though dreaded so universally, consumption has much in it of consolatory blessing. Of all diseases, it is best calculated to bring out the better traits of human character and develop the graces of the Christian life.

When death comes in the form of consumption, it is mercy compared with plague, fever, insanity, or sudden accident, and to one who is about to exchange worlds, it is well adapted to give the needful preparation. To many who have gone from your midst to the consumptive's grave, the disease has been a blessing in disguise, and many a parent can look back upon the sickness of a beloved child, who day by day wasted away, and finally fell into the arms of Jesus. This scourge of the climate becomes the mild and merciful discipline of God, to prepare the soul to enter upon the holy services of the upper temple. It accomplishes what fever and plague cannot, and leads the suffering disciple to sweet and calm submission to the will of God. Why then should consumption be so universally dreaded? It should not. Every step of its progress is mingled with mercy, and instead of being a sirocco which sweeps over human life, it is a merciful dispensation of Divine Providence, which announces death to man in the mildest way and with the kindliest tone. This will be evident if we attend to the following considerations:

1. Consumption gives time for reflection and thought.

2. Consumption is seldom, to any great extent, accompanied with pain.

3. Consumption seldom dethrones the reason.

4. Consumption ends in Death.

Faith in God removes all the terror, and fear, and sorrow of the tomb, and makes the grim monster a friend to help us on the passage to eternal life. Will you secure that faith, and be prepared for death, ready to meet the tyrant whether he comes in dreadful plague, in burning fever, or in the long wasting consumption, which is emphatically "the destruction which wasteth at noonday"?

NO TEARS IN HEAVEN.

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.—REV. xxi. 4.

I. Tears on earth.

1. Tears are often caused by *temporal depression.* The laboring man weeps on account of the scarcity, or inadequate remuneration of manual labor—he weeps, too, as he feels his failing strength for his secular pursuits.

2. Tears arising from *defective friendships.* Some of these are very intimate and peculiar, and must be very affecting. "Every heart knows its own bitterness," etc.

3. *Tears caused by affliction.* How frail is the human frame! To what numerous diseases is it liable, the seeds of which are often in the constitution, and by external circumstances, ripen and bring forth fruit to death.

4. Tears are caused by *bereavements.* It is a

solemn and an established fact that "we must needs die, and be as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again," yet bereavements do violence to the feelings, and deeply pierce the hearts of survivors; for the relationships of life, generally speaking, are most tender and endearing, and more especially so when sanctified and refined by Divine love.

5. *Many other causes of tears may be referred to.* The Christian weeps on account of his *moral imperfections.* He is weighed in the balance and found wanting.

II. **There shall be no tears in heaven.** "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

1. *Where?* In heaven—in God's own dwelling-place. In the Canaan above, where a tear was never yet shed, and never will.

2. *Who shall wipe them away?* "*God* shall." Their removal is Divine. His infinite love to His people insures it. His infinite power will accomplish it. The immutability of His promise and oath to save to the uttermost, is the security for it.

3. *When will He do it?* "God *shall.*" It is future. He wipes away many tears in this world. He wipes away the tears of the penitent, and gives pardon and peace. He many times wipes away the tears of the afflicted, and brings them forth from the furnace like gold seven times purified. He wipes away the tears of adversity, and his Providence turns their mourning into joy.

4. *How will He do it?* "Shall *wipe away all tears.*"

(*a*) He will do it *affectionately.*

(*b*) He will do it *effectually;* "*all tears*" shall be "*wiped away.*" The cause shall be removed, and the effect shall cease.

(*c*) *He will certainly do it.* The language is positive. "God *shall,*" etc. The faith which believes it rests upon a Rock—the Rock of ages—the immutability of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. The removal of tears implies the enjoyment of positive good. Instead of tears there will be joy—songs of triumph, and outbursts of gladness.

2. This freedom will be confined to God's people. Are you His?

3. How much we are indebted to Christ. He has entered heaven. He saves and prepares us for it.

4. How dreadful the prospect of the wicked! Their tears will never be wiped away.

NO NIGHT THERE.

BY THE REV. F. ST. JOHN CORBETT, A.M.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.—REV. xxii. 5.

IT is impossible for us to conceive an exact idea of what Heaven will be like. It is one of God's designs, that we shall not know on earth what He has "prepared for them that love Him." (See 1 Cor. ii. 9.)

In this respect God acts as a Father to us. As a parent will not allow a child to see a birthday or a Christmas present until the day for its presentation arrives, so God, Who "has prepared for them that love Him such good things as pass man's understanding," will not let them see those good things until the day of resurrection.

Yet He tells us something about Heaven. He tells us of many things which *will not be there*. There will be no more sea, no more curse, no more night. We will examine the significance of the fact that "there shall be no night there." It implies—

I. **No more sleep.** Some one might object, and say there is no cause for satisfaction in this. The busy man, he would say, enjoys sleep. It is his refreshment after the labors of the day. Heaven would be none the better for having no time of rest.

We answer, in Heaven there will be nothing to

make sleep either enjoyable or necessary. There will be *no more fatigue.* Yet, without sleep, in Heaven "the weary are at rest."

II. **No more sleeplessness.** Few things in life are so unpleasant as lying awake at night. It is one of the things that "make night hideous."

In Heaven there will be no sleeplessness, because there will be none of the ills which cause it, *e.g.*,

1. No sickness or sorrow.
2. No anxiety.
3. No anticipation of evil.

III. **No more fear.** Timid people are frightened most easily at night. Men and women have been found dead after a night's confinement in a dark and lonely place.

The darkness of night has this effect (in varying degrees according to the nervous temperament) on almost all people.

Even good people are nervous and timid at night.

Bad people are notably so. The conscience is an unpleasant companion in the dark. The poet Young says, in "Night Thoughts"—

> "By night an atheist half believes a God."
> —*Night v., line* 177.

In Heaven there will be no more fear.

IV. **No More Sin.** There is more sin of every kind committed at night than at any other time.

"Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." (See St. John iii. 19).

St. Paul says, "They that be drunken are drunken in the night." (1 Thess. v. 7).

Into the land of eternal day "there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they that are written in the Lamb's book of life." Rev. xxi. 27. In Heaven there shall be no more sin.

Conclusion.

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light." Jesus, Who is the "Light of the world" now, will also be the Light of the "world to come." St. John, who saw it, bare record, saying, "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof." (Rev. xxi. 23).

"There is no night in heaven,
In that blest world above
Work never can bring weariness,
For work itself is love.

LATTER-DAY GLORY.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, etc.—ZECH. xiv. 6–9.

THE "comfort of the Scriptures" is an expression that applies not only to its promises, but also to its predictions.

I. **The period described.** By "that day" the Christian dispensation is evidently intended, concerning which we are here reminded of three things:

1. Its mingled character. "The light shall not be clear, nor dark." Compared with the Jewish economy it is luminous, and yet much obscurity still remains; at present we only see through a glass darkly.

2. Its continuity. "It shall be one day," whatever its duration may be; and, notwithstanding its mixture of gloom and clearness, it is completely known to Jehovah, and even this feature is rendered subservient to His designs.

3. The brightness which will signalize its close. "It shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." After a long struggle, darkness will have to yield, and the light of truth and purity will be triumphant.

II. **The circumstance predicted.** "And it shall be in that day, that living waters," etc.

1. The figure employed to set forth the

gospel and its blessings. In whatever aspect man is regarded, it is peculiarly adapted to all his necessities.

(*a*) In his thirst for happiness.

(*b*) His spiritual barrenness.

(*c*) His moral defilement.

(*d*) His subjection to death.

2. The source whence these living waters emanate. "From Jerusalem." It was there the fountain was opened for sin and uncleanness, and it was there also the efficiency of these healing streams was first tried.

3. The direction in which they were to spread. "Half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea;" the one being the Mediterranean, and the other the Red Sea. It is well known that in those portions of the Gentile world which lay in the direction here indicated, the gospel most remarkably prevailed.

4. The perpetuity of their diffusion. "In summer and in winter shall it be." Nothing should stop their course; in the winter of persecution they were to flow, as well as in the summer of prosperity.

III. **The happy consummation announced.** "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one." All His rivals will be dethroned, and his claims will be universally acknowledged. In the emphatic words of another prophet, "He will

famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship Him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen."

Have we submitted to His authority? Are we now disposed to say, "O Lord our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of Thy name?"

BREVITY OF HUMAN LIFE.

Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey. If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself: I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I be wicked, why then labor I in vain? If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, etc.—Job ix. 25–33.

THE words we have read contain several topics which deserve to be seriously pondered. They give us a view of man—

I. **In the brevity of his mortal existence.** The figures which are here employed are most expressive.

1. "My days are swifter than a post." The common rate of traveling in the East is exceedingly slow, being scarcely more than two miles an hour. But while the speed of the ordinary caravans is so tardy, it is very different with the couriers, who are employed by

government to convey important despatches to some distant province of the kingdom. They continue at full gallop from one stage to another, and all their movements indicate that the king's business requires haste. The patriarch, therefore, when showing how rapidly his days passed, compares them, not to the slow caravan, but to the swiftest messenger.

2. "They are passed away as the swift ships." Not ordinary vessels, but those which, from the lightness of their construction, sailed with the greatest celerity. The marginal rendering is "ships of desire," intimating that they were anxiously expected at the port for which they were bound, either on account of the value of their cargo, or because it consisted of commodities which would soon spoil, such as ripe fruit; and consequently that every effort would be made to reach the place of destination with as little delay as possible.

3. "As the eagle that hasteth to the prey." We can hardly conceive of anything more rapid than the motion of the eagle as it darts upon its victim.

Is life so short? Are our days so fleeting? Then, whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.

II. **As the subject of sore affliction and distress.** Man that is born of a woman is of a few days; but that is not all—he is also full of trouble-

This leads us to remark—

1. That the distresses of some are very severe and numerous. Such was the case with Job. "If I say, I will forget my complaint," etc. He made an effort to be cheerful, but his troubles pressed so heavily upon him that every attempt was fruitless.

2. That great afflictions should not be regarded as evidence of any special guilt. "I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent." His impression was, that God was displeased with him, and that his sufferings were the proof of His displeasure.

III. **As guilty and polluted, but ignorant of the divinely appointed method of deliverance.** Job was not wicked in the sense in which his friends regarded him; and yet, at times, he is almost forced to acknowledge that their charges were true, inasmuch as God had seemed to act towards him as if he were ungodly. When he says, "If I be wicked, why labor I in vain?" he appears to submit indirectly to so serious an accusation, and in consequence to regard all further efforts as unavailing.

The concluding portion of this paragraph may therefore be applied to those who are in some measure awakened to a sense of their guilt, but who are unacquainted with the divine method of acceptance and purification. Thus regarded, we notice—

1. The expedient proposed: "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean." Snow water was supposed to possess peculiar cleansing qualities. This efficacy was probably ascribed to it in consequence of snow being a thing of rare occurrence in the country where Job dwelt, and also on account of its unsullied whiteness. But were the popular opinion as to its purifying virtues, well-founded, all it could do was to cleanse the outward man; and hence it may be regarded as symbolical of what the apostle calls "bodily exercises," which at best profit little. To the Pharisees the Saviour said, "Ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter:" while, on the other hand, the Psalmist declares, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom."

2. The inefficacy of this expedient. "Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." After the most copious application of snow water to his person; after all his efforts, however strenuous, in reforming his outward conduct, in the sight of God he would still be an object of abhorrence. (Luke xvi. 15.)

3. The reasons of this inefficacy. They are twofold:

(*a.*) The great disparity of their condition. "For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in

judgment." To challenge the approval of our fellow-creatures is one thing, but to enter into judgment with the Supreme Being is quite a different matter. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." And the standard by which He judges is infinitely higher than that which men adopt, whether in reference to their own character or that of others.

(*b.*) The want of a suitable person to interpose between them. "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." A guilty and polluted creature cannot approach the just and holy God in a direct manner. "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" This question Job was unable to answer; or at least, in his present state of darkness and despondency, he has lost sight of what had been revealed to him concerning that great and gracious One, Who was to appear in the latter days upon the earth. But for the patriarch's mournful complaint we can substitute the clear, decisive, and unspeakably important statement of the apostle—"There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." To Him let us, with the fullest confidence, commit our cause; for such is His influence in the court of heaven that no favor is ever

denied Him; and His precious blood, the merits of which He pleads before the Father, when sprinkled upon the conscience, will do what the purest snow water could never accomplish.

OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE STATE.

BY THE LATE REV. JAMES STEWART.

For we know, that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house, etc.—2 COR. v. 1–9.

IN this passage there are three states described, of which each believer has, or shall have, an experience.

I. **The present state.**

1st. A house. 2d. An earthly house. 3d. A tabernacle. 4th. A house to be taken down. 5th. We are burdened in it. 6th. Being burdened we groan.

II. **The state immediately after death.**

1st. Unclothed. 2d. Mortality. 3d. Present with the Lord. 4th. Expectancy. 5th. More desirable than the present state.

III. **The ultimate, eternal, and glorified state.**

1st. Clothed. 2d. A building of God, not made with hands. 3d. Eternal. 4th. In Heaven. 5th. Mortality swallowed up of life. 6th. For "ever with the Lord."

THE WAY OF BEREAVEMENT.

BY THE REV GEORGE LITTING.

"*And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.*" GENESIS xxxvii. 34, 35.

WE know that the son so piteously lamented by his father was not dead. But Jacob did not know it. To all intents and purposes the son was dead to him, and so continued to be, without a ray of hope to the contrary, for some twenty years or so. The case, then, possessed all the characteristics of a real bereavement.

There is nobody, I imagine, but sympathizes with the grief and desolation of the sorrow-smitten old man, thus called upon, without warning, and without preparation, to bear the deprivation of what had become to him the light of his eyes, and the joy of his heart. The pathos of the text is extreme.

But the Way he had to go, the Way of Mourning induced by Bereavement, is one universally trodden. There is no escape therefrom, though, when forced to travel it, one is apt to think that all the crushing trouble of the road falls upon him alone.

"I have not," she said, "because the people of

the village told me the living are few, but the dead are many."

Buddha replied, "You thought that you alone had lost a son; but the law of death is that among all living things there is no permanence."

I think that this parable, as well as the pathetic lamentation of Jacob, brings out the fact that, in the universal experience, when bereavement befalls, there is, in the survivors, too little hope, and too much doubt and fear.

"Every deceased friend," it has been said, "is a magnet drawing us into another world." But does the magnet always draw in a good sense? Is faith enlarged by the catastrophe? Do Heaven's gates open wider?

God forbid that I should say one word against the blinding sorrow which fills the eyes when some dear one is rent away, or that I should bid one less drop to fall at a time when—

> "The Saviour marks the tears we shed,
> For Jesus wept o'er Lazarus dead."

Only let not this sorrow blind the heart also; let it not impoverish the hope of Heaven; let it not breed a morbid misery, which, like the liver of wretched Tityus, in heathen mythology, only produces and reproduces itself to be preyed upon by an ever-present, unpitying vulture.

Could Jacob have known the whole truth, as it was afterwards made clear to him, what different

feelings would not have been aroused within him! He would surely have been filled with adoration of the Most High for His mysterious providence in removing the dearest, best-beloved son for a short space from him, in order to set him among princes, and constitute him a saviour of mankind. But for Joseph's disappearance, what would have become of even Jacob himself and his whole family?

So, often, there is benefit in bereavement: benefit to those who are quickest called away from the infinite contingencies of perversity in a strayed and straying world, to be exalted in a world where perversity is not found; and benefit to those who still remain, cherishing, and not losing, the memory of the dear departed, together with the certain hope of a re-union by-and-by in the mansions of the blest.

Take two brief illustrations of the different ways in which the Road of Bereavement may be trodden :—

"After the death of Stella," writes Dr. Johnson, "Swift's benevolence was contracted, and his severity exasperated. He drove his acquaintance from his table, and wondered why he was deserted!"

For the loss of one dear friend he must needs be a churlish, self-tormenting misanthrope, who could feel no thankfulness for the friends that still remained, nor pay any regard to them. Such

conduct is in the nature of blasphemy—an accusation of the Most High.

The other illustration concerns no such genius and philosopher as Swift, but only a dear little girl, who had been taught to pray specially for her father. God took him suddenly away.

Kneeling at her evening devotion, her voice faltered, and, as her eyes met her mother's, she sobbed, "O mother! I cannot leave him *all out*. Let me say, Thank God I had a dear father once, so I can keep him in my prayers!"

Which of these two is the better way judge ye.

For my part, and I speak as one who has had bitter sorrow of the kind we are considering, I think that many a stricken heart can learn a sweet lesson from this dear child: Let us remember even in bereavement, to thank God for all the good that is past, and ask Him to enable us to look upon it as an earnest of the everlasting good that is to come.

PEACE AT THE LAST.

BY THE REV J. B. C. MURPHY

Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right: for that shall bring a man peace at the last. PSALM xxxvii. 38.

AND David, when he wrote the words, knew full well what he was writing about, and was well qualified to speak.

His days were in "the sere and yellow leaf"; the closing days of a life which had been full of vicissitudes, rich in experience, the life of a man whose sin had been deadly, whose repentance sincere. He was one who had received at the hand of his God not a few blessings; and who had seen, as people are accustomed to express it, his "share of troubles."

Such a man, speaking in the evening of life, holds up the life of innocence, guilelessness, purity, as the only life worth coveting, because it is the only one that can bring a man a blessing that is unspeakable, and that in the hour in which he needs it most of all—"*peace at the last!*" "Keep innocency!"

But let us see what it was that led David to write these words.

I. Life—its puzzles, its difficulties, its anomalies—all these things were exercising the minds of men one thousand years before the Birth of Christ, even as these same things continue to exercise men's minds now, nearly two thousand years after.

The tide of life, as it rolled on in Jerusalem of old, the busy capitol over which David ruled, presented aspects in many points exactly similar to what may be seen in any modern city to-day. Men and women were absorbed in their special pursuits and occupations, engrossed by many cares and anxieties, just as men and women are in these practical nineteenth century days.

And there, too, appeared that great puzzle which, I suppose, will continue to exercise men while the world shall last, David's theme in this Thirty-seventh Psalm, the prosperity of the wicked, the troubles of the righteous.

And then, too, crept into men's minds that subtle temptation, born of impatience, if this be so, then why not use the remedy which we find ready to our hands? Why not meet wickedness with wickedness? Why not oppose violence to wrong? Why not face sin with iniquity?

To this David answers, "I have been young, and now am old."

Yes, it is when the sun is setting, when life's day is closing in, when the end is near, that the soul's vision is clearest and truest. Then earth-born mists lift and clear away. The world's false gilt and glitter vanish. A man sees that things are not always what they seem. He sees at last that we need never envy the prosperity of the wicked. Lives scandalous in themselves never can be really happy lives, even in the present, and the

great test is yet to come. For good and for bad alike, the end must come. Viewed by the light which, from another world, is shed upon that end, many startling facts are revealed. The life of earthly wickedness and prosperity is seen, scorched and shriveling up, and only "a horror of great darkness" remains; while all the roughness, all the sharp edges of the other life are softened, mellowed, purified, and made bright as gold in the fire, and peaceful is the close of a life well-spent.

Therefore, "keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right; for that shall bring a man peace at the last."

II. It was the experience of a man full of days, long years ago. It is surely the experience of many an aged pilgrim now. What man or woman is there around whom the shadows are lengthening, the sun of whose life is hastening to its rest, who will not echo the Psalmist's words, and allow that their own experience proves their truth?

"Grant us Thy peace, Lord, throughout our earthly life,
Our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife:
Then, when Thy voice shall bid our conflict cease,
Call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace."

EXTRACT FROM A MEMOIR.

ONE of the strongest men in the Church wrote: "He was more to me than any other man. He had the very highest honor and integrity. He did his work with a strong, steady, brave hand. I drift amid the *débris* of shattered craft—leaky, water-logged, engineless craft—on the high seas of life. They clog the commerce of heaven. He was stanch. There were no worm-eaten timbers in his hull. He stayed me in times of doubt. In him grace produced the peaceable fruits of righteousness. His was a grand life."

Such as he are too conscientious, in too deadly earnest for the Lord's glory, to do much personal exploitation. It is easy enough to be "brilliant" when one gets the knack of saying bright things. The crowds never note nice developments of character. Few who carry about their small measuring-rods, can tiptoe up to discern the height of such stature as that of this Prince of the Realm. The truly great are they who learn of the Lowly One of Galilee. Their eternity of blessing is beyond our bravest thought. It is written of them, "They shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

This grand, silent life has passed out of mortal sight. Its lessons are priceless. The secret of that magnificent life was given in a letter that he

wrote four or five hours before the chariot swung low for him: "Be all right at any cost. Everything is cheap in contrast with God's indorsement."

* * * * * *

His knowledge of the rich, beautiful things of Scripture was wonderful. The Lord's gentleness made him great. His kindness of speech about those who misunderstood him was marvelous. He seemed, like Moses, to have the majesty of meekness that belongs to one who dares to talk face to face with God.

* * * * * *

So lived, so loved, so triumphed through faith in our Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit, one of the noblest men whose lip ever touched the silver trumpet of the temple service. For him the apostle's words were made good: "To live is Christ; to die is gain."

From "A Prince of the Realm.

LIFE AS A TALE.

BY THE REV. A. BENFIELD.

We spend our years as a tale that is told.—PSALMS XC. 9.

INTRODUCTION.

WE understand this text to mean that life is short and transitory—a mere sigh or sob which is soon gone.

It seems to convey the same idea as Job xxxvii. 2, "Hear attentively the *noise* of his *voice* and the *sound*," etc.

The sense of the writer seems to be, a muttering, a meditation, "an idle tale," not that of a *measuring off*.

And is it not too true, that, with many, life is simply an idle story.

Life then as described in our text is represented as an ejaculation, a sharp cry that is soon lost.

I. We remark that man's years are like a "tale," **because their contents are soon told.** It takes but a few words to sum up the history of the longest life.

A traveler may use much time and energy in climbing the Alps, but by one glance he surveys all the ground over which he has passed.

1. Life's story is soon told, because it is brief. The longest life seems broken off in its strength. But what of the young?

A flower plucked in the bud!

A ship wrecked before leaving the harbor!

A sunset "while it is yet day!"

(*a.*) Brief compared with the Patriarchs.

(*b.*) Brief compared with eternity.

2. It is soon told, because uneventful.

Few *real* events in a man's life.

II. The **years of man** like a *tale* **are varied.** Tales vary, some of sorrow, some of joy, etc. Some tales become popular, some fall "flat." Here is a man before whom the world bows, while another pines in obscurity and dies in a garret.

1. Varied in respect to action.

2. In respect to length.

III. The years of man, like a tale, **leave an impression upon the observing mind.** Somebody is made better or worse by every life. Life is a drama, the curtains rise, the scene begins and ends, and the spectators are made better or worse for seeing it.

1. Impressive, because the few words of a man's life tell what a man is. Short cries are impressive.

2. Impressive, because they reveal what he will be. Life is but the preface to eternity.

IV. Life is like a tale, **because it must close.** Not all the same length, but all must end. "What will the ending be?" etc.

In Conclusion.

1. Man's life like a tale will live on after he has gone. God stories and men never die, etc.

2. Man's life like a tale is suggestive. A wreck is a sad story, but shows the dangerous rocks, etc.

Place the failures of other men on the chart, and steer clear; make another's failures your success.

3. Men are in a great measure the authors of their own stories.

APPLICATION.

What is your life, etc.?

If our days are so few let us live them well.

If life ends so suddenly, prepare for the exit.

HUMAN MORTALITY.

BY REV. R. ANDREW GRIFFIN.

We all do fade as a leaf.—ISA. lxiv. 6.

THE prophet is speaking of spiritual, rather than physical, decay. Athough the verse may be explained thus, we are unclean before God, our boasted righteousness is an abomination to Him, we are unprepared, yet dying, our iniquities bear us away from hope and God, as the wind bears the faded leaf from the tree.

Let us accommodate the text to the subject of human mortality.

I. **Consider the certainty and universality of death.** The leaf of the cedar as surely fades as

the petals of the rose. The majestic oak, the lofty poplar, the umbrageous yew, the stunted fir or the tiny fern, at some time or other, shed their leaves. Their age does not shield, nor their youth exempt therefrom. Whether they grow on the exposed and bleak hill-side or in the sheltered and peaceful valley, whether they be found in the tropic or the frigid zone, their leaf must fade.

So among men. The child declines in the warm bosom of its mother; the wife in the joy-giving atmosphere of home; the husband amid the group of tearful little ones; the old man beneath the watchful eye of old friends and long-beloved relatives.

There are skilful physicians, but at some time or other they must be but spectators of the ills they cannot remedy. The physician may arrest the progress of disease, but death still holds on his way, and none but Hezekiah's God can hinder his approach.

II. **Review the various phases of death.** *There is a marvelous diversity in death-bed scenes.* Some fill the soul with horror, others affect the heart with pity, others impress the mind with reverential awe, and others may be spoken of as truly sublime. For example, the death of the despairing libertine, the lonely pauper, the venerable parent, the triumphant saint. Like the leaves of the forest, some, in fading, lose all trace of beauty; others are invested with a loveliness they never

before displayed. *The fading leaf forcibly reminds us of beauty in death.* Of those who at the last display resignation and confidence more fully than they ever did before; of those who have appeared inspired with the vision of the future state, whose faces have been clothed in such radiance that the shadow of death seemed to fall on them in vain.

III. **Reflect on the gradual approach of death.** The leaf fades imperceptibly, but surely. I address those who every day are declining. Youth is passed, gray hairs appear here and there, wrinkles are faintly discernible upon the forehead. To call ourselves "dying men" when comparative health is ours, is no fiction, but the sternest truth. Would to God that we could say of men what we can of the leaves, as they fade they cling less tightly to the tree. Man becomes more and more oblivious of death as the dreadful reality presents itself. It is *the child* and the Christian who mark the advent of death.

IV. **Observe the season of death.** There is "a time to die," one season for all. Death comes when our work is done, our mission accomplished, *not before.* But we the servants of God or of the ruler of darkness, when we die we have fulfilled our service to one or the other. Every leaf, however minute, has exerted a positive influence. The giant oak is like the Coral Islands, the lasting memorial of myriads of ephemeral things.

Generations upon generations of leaves have in the oak the monument of their being and influence.

Happy were it for us if our work were as beneficial and successful.

Learn from the mission of the leaf to—

1. *Shelter the weary.*
2. *Delight the eye of beauty.*
3. *Nourish and bless the tree of human society.*
4. *Proclaim the wisdom of the Creator.*

Then we shall fade in beauty and honor beneath the sun-like smile of God.

V. **Ponder the cause of death.** Why do leaves fade? Were they all evergreens (not in the sense of those so called by us) in paradise? We know in the paradise of which Eden was a type there is the tree with its twelve manner of fruits, yielding them every month, and its leaves, far from fading themselves, are for the healing of a fading world.

Sin is the remote, if not immediate, cause of all decay.

Death, everywhere, is the voice of sin. Let the silent testimony of every fading leaf instruct us; let our instruction avail to make us cry for deliverance from that second death—that death from which there is no resurrection.

In conclusion—

1. *A word of recapitulation.* "We *all* do fade." Every leaf the world over. And we who moralize

on death, with all our fellows, must pass away. Let us then *prepare.*

2. *A word of consolation.* The tree loses its foliage for God to clothe it again. The body declines and dies; but for the righteous God has a richer and more glorious vesture in store.

THE AFFLICTED PATRIARCH.

"*My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me. Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress,*" *etc.* JOB X. 1–3.

"THE best of men," says Philip Henry, "are but men at the best." That Job was a good man is undoubted, and yet he was far from being perfect. Even in the grace of patience, for which he was most distinguished, there was much lacking as these words clearly prove.

I. **His mournful complaint.** "My soul is weary of my life." There is a sense in which we may truly say, "I would not live always," and yet to desire death may be an improper desire; and such appears to have been the case with that of the afflicted patriarch on this occasion. So it was with Jonah when he prayed, "O Lord, I beseech thee, take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." Paul, on the other hand, although he was fully persuaded that death

would be unspeakable gain, was yet willing to abide in the flesh, that he might continue to be of service to the souls of men.

"I will leave my complaint upon myself;" or, I will give myself up to complaint; I will give way to it, and not restrain myself. "I will speak in the bitterness of my soul." Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. When the heart is full of joy, the mouth will speak joyfully; when it is full of pride, it will speak proudly; when it is full of anger, it will speak angrily; so, when it is full of bitterness, it will speak bitterly.

II. **His anxious plea.** "I will say unto God, Do not condemn me." In whatever sense these words were used by Job, to us they are exceedingly appropriate in their literal meaning. Let us consider, 1. What they imply. (1.) A consciousness of guilt. The innocent have no need to fear being condemned. (2.) That the condemnation which God threatens in his word is richly deserved. 2. The encouragement we have to offer this prayer. It proceeds from various sources. (1.) The work of Christ. (2.) The character of God. (3.) The promises of the gospel. (4.) The experience of sinners.

While the patriarch begs of God not to condemn him, he also wished to be informed on the cause of his peculiar dealings with him. "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me." Many

who can give a reason of the hope that is in them, cannot give a reason for the sufferings which are laid upon them.

III. **His rash expostulation.** 1. "Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress?" That He, "who is a God of truth and without iniquity," should be guilty of such conduct is altogether impossible. Instead of acting as an oppressor, he has ever been the friend of the oppressed. 2. "That thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands." Those whom he has formed and fashioned, however grieved he may be with their conduct, he cannot regard with contempt. "Behold, God is great, and despiseth not any." 3. "And shine upon the counsel of the wicked." The ungodly may prosper in the world, but they are no objects of envy notwithstanding.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF LIFE.

BY THE REV. S. BARING-GOULD.

"*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.*"—Ps. xxiii. 4.

I THINK there is something wondrously touching in the thought of David, the shepherd boy, singing these words whilst sitting on a wild thyme bank, crook in hand, watching his father's flock, in all the glory of an eastern sunset.

I will comment solely on the words of my text. The *valley of the shadow of death* is—

I. **This life—**

II. **Death.**

It is this life, because it is under the *shadow* of death. From the moment we enter this world that shadow lies on us. Of a child born into this world you can predict nothing, whether it will be great or insignificant, rich or poor, happy or sad, save this one thing—it will surely die.

And now what is given us in this valley to be our comfort and stay? The *rod* and the *staff*—the rod to correct, the staff to support.

The Rod of GOD chastises us when we would wander, it is laid on us as the cross which we are to bear; it is often heavy, it is always salutary; it often seems an evil, it always is a good. When anything rises to afflict us, to cross our wills, to disappoint our expectations, to frustrate our hopes, to check our impatience, do not let us chafe and beat against the barrier, it is the rod of GOD held out to keep us from straying, and to guide us into the right way.

The Staff of GOD supports us when we are feeble. Without that staff what should we do, to what should we cling? In weakness, in exhaustion, in mistrust of self, in consciousness of backsliding, out goes the hand, the staff is planted firm, and we clutch at it, and our feet are strengthened, and we are able to stand. Not

only so, but when we have fallen and have no power to rise, that staff is our comfort still, for to that we cling, and by that we lift up ourselves.

And now, in conclusion, let us take the breathings of a pious and timorous soul expressing its fear to GOD, and let us hear the answer of GOD to that poor soul; let us take it as David may have imagined it, and with that we shall conclude.

Colloquy. *Pilgrim.* O my GOD! I have a long journey before me, and I know not the road—whither shall I go?

Master. I will bring thee forth into the paths of righteousness.

P. O my LORD! perils environ me, the savage lion walking about seeking whom he may devour. I am unarmed and weak, and I shall fall a ready prey; the thieves also are ready to strip me, and wound me, and leave me half dead and naked by the way.

M. Fear not, My son; My loving-kindness and protection shall follow thee all the days of thy life.

P. But, gracious LORD! the journey is beyond my strength; I shall faint with thirst, and hunger, and exhaustion of body.

M. My son, thou shalt go on from strength to strength; the pools shall be filled with water; I will anoint thine head with oil, prepare a table for thee in the wilderness, and thy cup shall be full.

P. O, dear Master, see! I stand upon the brink of the valley, and the river flows cold, and gray, and ghastly below, I fear!

M. When thou passest through the waters, I am with thee.

P. Master! the chill of the wave of death has reached me; I am horribly afraid, the wave goes over me.

M. My son, I give thee My rod and staff to comfort thee.

Oh! the retrospect from the fold when Jordan is passed, and the Promised Land is won. Surely then the cry will be, "Thy loving-kindness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life; and now will I dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."

SANCTIFIED AFFLICTION.

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—2 COR. iv. 17.

THE Apostle's state of mind was truly a happy one. He was able to endure manifold afflictions and privations with patience and contentment, and to think of them as tending to promote high and holy purposes. He enumerates some of those afflictions. And then he sees beyond these the rest and glory upon which he will enter when they are passed away.

Consider:

I. The Christian's estimate of affliction. The

word "affliction" arises from a word which signifies something that beats down, presses sore, and is in itself grievous and tormenting.

The forms of human trial are boundlessly diversified.

There are: (1) bodily sufferings; (2) seasons of providential darkness; (3) times of trial and tempest; (4) trials due to spiritual adversaries and weapons, which disturb the soul.

Affliction, in some of its diversified forms, is the inevitable lot of man.

In itself it is painful and bitter, and when it comes upon us, we are in danger of betraying symptoms of impatience and repining.

In the text it appears under a different aspect.

It is "light"—therefore it ought not to weigh down and crush the spirit of the Christian believer.

It is of short duration—"is but for a moment." It may endure for weeks, or months, or a lifetime. Yet it is short. Contrasting the sufferings of time with the glory of eternity we can say, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment."

This view of affliction is calculated to sustain, raise, and cheer the mind of the sufferer.

If the afflictions themselves are looked at, the prospect is dark and covered with dismay.

But the eye of faith sees above the cloud the "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and affliction appears but light and momentary.

II. **The beneficial tendency of affliction.** It "worketh" or *prepareth* us for a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The present state of man is not to be regarded as his ultimate condition, nor this world as his final home.

While on earth he is in a state of probation or discipline.

Afflictions are a part of that discipline, by which he is rendered "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

Affliction is designed—

1. *To correct and reclaim.*—Man is prone to wander from God. Milder means often fail, and affliction has to be tried. (Psalm cxix. 67.)

2. *To promote spiritual advantage.*—The grace of God beats the spears of affliction into pruning hooks, to them that are in Christ.

Times of sickness are often occasions of heart searching and of new resolves for the future.

3. *To subdue the mind.*—Affliction often prostrates pride, subdues self.

It brings the Christian into more entire subjection to the will of God.

4. *To refine, purify, and elevate the Christian character.*—It is often compared to a furnace in which metals are purified; the dross of corruption is removed, and the gold of grace is refined.

The trial of faith is said to be "more precious than that of gold."

Faith is more valuable than gold, so the trial of it is more precious.

Metal put into the fire loses its weight because the dross is purged away. The test cannot increase its purity without lessening its weight.

Faith gains by the trial. Not only does it increase in purity, but it increases also in weight. The Christian is made a holier, a better, and a happier man. He has increased in humility, patience, knowledge, holiness, communion with, and confidence in God his Saviour.

III. **The glory for which affliction prepares.** "A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The beauty and sublimity of this heavenly glory surpass the highest conception.

1. *There are different states or degrees of glory in heaven.*—"One star differeth from another star in glory." There are those who are saved "as by fire"; and others who have "an abundant entrance."

2. *This glory will be eternal in its duration.*—Earth's highest enjoyments are short-lived and soon pass away.

The eternity of this glory is secured by—

(*a*) The eternity of Him from whom it emanates.

(*b*) The inviolable fidelity and love of Him who has promised it.

3. *Its degree will be limited only by the faculties of the recipients.*

4. *It is a "weight" of glory.*—To gold and precious things weight adds value. This glory will be solid, substantial, weighty, requiring a character fitted to sustain it.

We should strive to improve the times of sorrow by learning humility, and by a renewed consecration of ourselves to God.

DEATH SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.

"*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and We shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,*" *etc.*—1 COR. XV. 50–58.

I. **The truths which the apostle here declares.** They may be viewed under two general particulars. We have:

1. Something impossible announced. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

2. Something mysterious revealed. "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

In addition to the general statement that all shall not sleep, but that all shall be changed, a peculiar feature is specified in reference to the resurrection of the dead, as well as the transformation of the living, namely, the instantaneousness of these great events. The resurrection will be accomplished in less time than it takes us to pronounce the word. Oh, amazing thought! One moment the deep silence of the grave will be unbroken; its countless victims will be all lying in apparently eternal bonds: the next moment the trumpet sounds, and the reign of death is over. Every grave is empty, and each ocean cavern yields up its spoil.

And so with the transformation of the living. Both events will take place simultaneously.

II. **The feelings of triumph which the apostle here expresses.** "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law. But, thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." This triumph may be regarded:

1. As prospective. Some regard these words as those of the saints on the great day. What they express will, doubtless, be their universal feeling: but it appears to be more natural to consider them as expressive of the apostle's own emotions, when, under the influence of that faith which brings distant objects near, he saw, as it

were, the blissful consummation which he had been describing.

2. As often realized. In many a chamber where the Christian meets his fate, are the joyful strains heard, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The believer is thus a conqueror when he dies, as well as when he shall arise from the grave.

3. It is intelligent. It is not a mere blind impulse, but its nature is understood. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." It is by the extraction of its sting that the triumph over death is enjoyed.

> "If sin be pardoned, I'm secure,
> Death hath no sting beside;
> The law gives sin its damning power,
> But Christ, my ransom, died."

4. It is attended with no feelings of self-gratulation. "But, thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

III. **The practical lessons which the apostle enjoins.** "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." The first thing to which we are exhorted is,

1. Steadfastness. This has special reference, probably, to faith. When addressing the Colossians, the apostle says that he greatly rejoiced in beholding, "the steadfastness of their faith in

Christ." "Whom resist," says Peter, "steadfast in the faith."

2. Immovability. As the former has respect to faith, this seems to allude to hope. Both are combined in the following words: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." Of that hope the apostle had now been discoursing: and his earnest desire was that the Corinthians might not be moved away from it. And so with us. We may have difficulties and temptations, but a hope so transporting should inspire us with a full determination, in the divine strength, to hold on in the midst of all.

3. Abounding activity. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

"Behold what heavenly prophets sung
Is now at last fulfilled;
And death yields up his ancient reign,
And vanquished, quits the field.

"Let Faith exalt her joyful voice,
And now in triumph sing:
O Grave, where is thy victory?
And where, O Death, thy sting?"

THE CONTEMPLATION OF HEAVEN.

BY THE REV. S. BARING-GOULD.

I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

ROM. viii. 18.

IT is a good thing to fix for a while our eyes on eternal happiness.

Swimming my horse across a broad river in Iceland, and made giddy by the whirling stream, my guide cried to me, "Look to the shore! By keeping the eye fixed thereon the giddiness passes."

I bid you now do the same. The whirl of life is about you, time rushes past, the wave of trouble rises against you—Look to the shore.

SUBJECT.

Suffering now—glory hereafter, this is what the Apostle speaks of.

I. Cleophas and another disciple on Easter Day in the evening, were going to Emmaus, and they talked together sadly of Christ's sufferings. They recalled His stripes and buffetings, the mockery, the crown of thorns, the purple robe, the reed, the nails, the spear. Then came Jesus and walked by their side, and their eyes discerned Him not. Then He said, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk and are sad?" And when they

told Him that they spake of the Passion, the sufferings of Christ, those sad things that had taken place, He asked, "*What things?*" as though He knew not, or remembered not, what had taken place.

For the joy set before Him, He had endured the Cross, despising the shame, and now that He was risen, He counted not those sorrows and pains. "What things?"—they were nothing to His Resurrection joy.

So will it be with the Blessed. Speak to them of the things they endured here below—the contradiction of sinners, the evil report, envy, insult, wrongs they underwent. "What things? Oh, we remember them no more in our present joy." Speak to the martyrs of their cruel torments, the ax, the rack, the stake, the saw, the cross, the leaded whip, the wild beasts wherewith they fought. "What things? Oh, they were nothing, they have faded like a dream in our present gladness."

Ah! you might speak now to St. Paul of his labors more abundant, his stripes above measure, his frequent prisons, his stoning, his three shipwrecks, the night and day in the deep; his journeyings often, his perils of water, perils of robbers, perils of his own countrymen, perils by the heathen, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils on the sea, perils among false brethren; his weariness and painfulness, his

watchings often, his hunger, and thirst, and fastings often, his cold and nakedness. Oh! what a list to remember! "What things?"

II. The glory is to be revealed in us—in our own selves. These poor mean bodies of ours, these feeble, timorous souls, will be the chosen vessels for the revelation of future glory. The soul will have struggled through its encumbrances, will have had purged away in the fire that tries every man's work, its dross, that dross that all saw here, so that few marked the sterling metal, and it will shine forth in its full power, growing in knowledge and love through eternity. The soul delights in knowing and it delights in loving; God is infinite, and through eternity it will be acquiring fresh knowledge of the infinite perfections of God and His works, and will be acquiring more love for Him Whom it knows ever more perfectly. And the body raised and glorified will ever be in the presence of the glorious God Man.

"O what are all my sufferings here,
If, Lord, thou count me meet
With that enraptured host to appear,
And worship at Thy feet?"

HUMAN LIFE.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me.—PSALM CXXXVIII. 7.

THIS utterance of the pious Psalmist suggests three ideas concerning our existence on this earth :—

I. **The universal law of human life.** What is it? It is expressed in one word,—*walking*. Life is a "walk," a journey. It is constant action, and constant action onward. Life is never stationary; it is always on the move; it is motion. Walking implies these two things :—

1. *Constant change of position.* Every step puts us in a fresh point of space, and surrounds us with something new in scenery. The hedges, the fields, the trees, through which the traveler passed yesterday in his journey, he has left behind in the distance, to-day. It is so with life. The circumstances through which we passed yesterday are gone forever, and those that surround us now will be in the past to-morrow. Walking implies :—

2. *Constant approximation to destiny.* Every step brings the traveler nearer to his destination. Our life is tending to a grand terminus. That terminus is the grave for the body, and retribution for the soul. Never were we so near this terminus as now. The walk of life is :—

(*a*) A *constant* walk. There is no pause; asleep and awake we are still going. There is no sitting

down a moment to admire the scenery through which we are passing. The wheels of life know no pause. The walk of life is:—

(*b*) A *rapid* walk. Job compares the movement to the swiftest thing of his day. "The weaver's shuttle," "the post," "the swift ships," etc. The walk of life is:—

(*c*) An *irretraceable* walk. We cannot go back one step. Such is life. We shall return no more to our houses, etc. Another idea suggested by the text in relation to our existence on earth is:—

II. **The saddening probabilities of human life.** Life is *not only* a walk, but a walk often "in the midst of trouble." It is not a walk on the green sward, under the cloudless azure, with a soft refreshing breeze breathing on our frames. Since the introduction of sin into our world, it has never been a walk of unmingled pleasure. All here meet with trials on the way; but some more than others. Some have to walk through "the *midst* of trouble;" they are always in it, as the three Hebrew youths were in the furnace. There are always the stinging reptiles, and the prowling beasts, and the rough winds, and the scorching rays. The troubles are of various kinds. *Physical*—bodily pains and diseases; *moral*—the conflict of passions, the remorse of conscience, and the dread of death; *social*—disappointments in business, the treachery of false friends, the cor-

ruption of the world, and the bereavement of death. Notwithstanding the beautiful earth beneath our feet, and the bright heavens that encircle us, and the gaiety of humanity in some of its aspects, the walk of man through this world is through trouble. Another idea suggested by the text in relation to our existence on earth is:—

III. **The grand support of human life.** "Thou wilt revive me."

1. *God is an all-sufficient support.* He is equal to all our emergencies. "He is our refuge and strength," etc. There is no enemy from which He cannot deliver us; there is no trial under which He cannot support us; there is no danger from which He cannot rescue us. In the fiery furnace, in the surging waters, in the "valley of the shadow of death," He is all-sufficient.

2. *He is the only effective support.* No one else can support you. "Put not your trust in princes."

3. *He is an available support.* Available to all at any time. "Call upon me in the time of trouble and I will deliver you." "Take no thought for the morrow." "Cast all your care on Him."

Brother, art thou in the midst of trouble, with the storm gathering around thee? are thou crying with an old poet?—

> Near and more near the billows rise,
> E'en now my steps they lave,
> And death to my affrighted eyes,
> Comes near in every wave.

Then I bid thee trust in Him that liveth forever—

> Though griefs unnumbered throng thee round,
> Still in thy God confide,
> Whose finger marks the seas their bound,
> And curbs the headlong tide.—*Merrick.*

THE BENEFITS OF PRAYER IN AFFLICTION.

I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplication; because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow, then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul!—PSALM CXVI. 1-4.

THE Psalms contain striking representations of deep personal experience; and not unfrequently these representations are pictures, exact and striking, of our own case, either recalling to our minds what have been our circumstances, or encouraging us under similar feelings.

In this passage we have—

I. **A representation of distressing circumstances.**—"The sorrows of death compassed me and the pains of hell gat hold upon me."

The fear of death when the soul is unprepared for heaven.

From this fear the Christian is delivered.

II. **The conduct of the Psalmist under these circumstances.** "Then called I upon the name of the Lord.

Remarks here—

1. *The promptitude of the application.* "*Then* called I upon the name of the Lord."

Safety is theirs alone who call upon God in trouble.

Deliverance is promised to them. (Psa. l. 15).

2. *The subject of his petition.* "Deliver my soul."

Whatever his circumstances, the Psalmist's chief concern was for his soul's security.

3. *The fervency of his prayer.* "I beseech Thee."

Fervor in prayer must be regulated by circumstances. It is to be distinguished from mere excitement.

III. **The happy results of this prayer.**

1. *The prayer was heard.* God ever listens to the voice of His creatures.

He Himself inspires all true prayer.

The Psalmist declares that his soul was delivered from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling (verse 8).

2. *The Psalmist formed a resolution to love the Lord.* This will be the first return with all who are truly delivered.

It will be proportioned to the mercy displayed. (Compare Luke vii. 37, ff.).

3. *And a resolution to persevere in that love.* "As long as I live."

If God hears us as sinners, how much more when justified by faith and reconciled to him.

We may take encouragement that in similar circumstances prayer will not be in vain

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THEMES FOR THE DAY OF ADVERSITY.

BY THE REV. R. ANDREW GRIFFIN.

In the day of adversity consider.—Eccl. vii. 14.

I. Some themes for saints in the day of adversity.

1. Consider *who sends adversity.* One who has known it in all its phases—poverty, forlornness, persecution, physical pain, mental anguish, heart-distress. "A Man of Sorrows." He was *nailed* to a cross; we are but *bearers* of a cross. He was in the thick darkness; we are but in the Valley of the *Shadow.*

2. Consider *why it is sent.* Not as punishment, but as chastisement. Our wounds are the wounds of the pruning-knife. Our bitter draughts are medicines.

3. Consider *what you possess, even in the day of adversity.* Let the rich man walk round his domain in the day he has lost some of his wealth. You have now a throne of grace, a volume of promises, a fruitful vineyard, brethren beloved, and a gracious God!

4. Consider *what you shall be after the day of adversity.* Profited on earth. more meetened for

heaven. A glorious future. How near are some of you. Your heads are silvering, the silver preparatory to the golden crown!

5. Consider *what you need now to glorify God* You have need of patience, resignation, content ment. You may honor God in "this day" as you cannot in any other period of your earthly life.

II. **Some themes for sinners in the day of adversity.**

1. Consider *the joys you have had.* God has tried to woo you by blessings. He has tried the sunshine. This has failed. What but adversity can He try *now?*

2. Consider *what you deserve.* Think of your position—a rebel, a traitor to God! Have you the deserts of your sins? Nay, could you see sin as God does, you would marvel you are out of hell! Oh, the forbearance of God to you. Where are your companions?

3. Consider *whence your adversity comes.* Is it not sin's offspring? You have sown to the flesh. You now suffer the fruit of rebellion. The blow you have aimed at the throne has rebounded on your own arm.

4. Consider *the infinitely greater adversity of lost souls.* In your adversity you have friends to sympathize with you, a home in which to rest, sleep for the refreshment of your body, you can hope for a brighter day. The lost know nothing of all this.

5. Consider *Jesus is willing to save in this day of adversity.* Oh, weep for sin! and all other tears shall be wiped away. Cry for salvation! and all other wants shall distress no longer. Live to God! and your day of adversity shall become brighter than all the past days of prosperity.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

BY REV. JAMES STEWART.

"*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of Life.*"—REV. ii. 10.

CHRIST was and is faithful to the interests of His people—"the faithful and true."

I. **The text implies obligations to Christ's service.** These spring from—

1. Christ's boundless excellency — infinitely worthy.

2. His right of property in us—created—redeemed—created anew, etc.

3. His right of property in all we have.

4. Our covenants and engagements—sworn unto the Lord.

II. **The text implies temptations to unfaithfulness.**

1. His service hard to flesh and blood.

2. A large bribe offered to desert and betray—"the world."

3. Positive persecution often met with—"all who live godly," etc.

III. **The text furnishes the measure of faithfulness—death.**

1. This test has often been applied.

2. Christian faithfulness has stood it.

3. An apparently less severe test sometimes more readily yielded to.

IV. **The text implies that the trial of faithfulness shall cease with time.**

1. There is no corruption in Heaven. Chap. xxi. 27.

2. There is no misrepresentation there.

3. There is no tempter there.

V. **The text reveals the reward of faithfulness.**

1. A crown—honor, dominion.

2. Of life—a living, lasting crown.

3. Not as a recompense, but appropriate.

VI. **The text connects time with eternity.**

1. We think of going, and leaving all behind.

2. The past is there already. "He that soweth to the Spirit," etc.

3. Each one weaves his own destiny.

VII. **The text shows the author of this connection—Christ.**

1. Omniscient. 2. Omnipotent.

3. Unchangeable. 4. Equitable.

THE AUTHOR AND END OF AFFLICTION.

BY THE REV. J. J. S. BIRD, B.A.

"*We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? etc.*—HEBREWS, xii. 9, 10.

WE have a parallel here between the great Father of all and our earthly parents. Parents correct children. But they do so for their good. God corrects His people. He also does so for their advantage. The text urges three facts with regard to human affliction:

I. **Its authorship.** It comes from God. Infidelity attributes the sufferings of life:

1. *To chance*—man's lot being, as it were, shaken up in a bag, and turned out according to luck.

2. *To natural infirmity.* They say all are subject to certain ills.

3. *To human folly.* Man's want of thought and carefulness, or want of philosophy, causes him suffering.

But trials do not come by accident; they are sent by infinite wisdom, and in mercy and love.

II. **Its end.** (verse x.) "For our profit, etc. God does not enjoy suffering, neither would He willingly grieve the children of men.

1. *To teach us patience.* The human heart is obstinate.

2. *To induce humility.* Pride is the crown of sin.

3. *To teach resignation.* Perfect resignation is the highest Christian attainment.

4. *To cause all these virtues to make us "partakers with His holiness."*

III. **Its responsibilities.**

1. *Affliction should not be deepened.*

2. *It should not crush the heart.*

3. *It should be a matter of prayer.* Above all, remember that time is short, and that in another world all tears shall be wiped away.

HOLY DEAD.

"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."—HEB. vi. 12.

DR. DAVIDSON translates this verse thus: "That ye become not dull, but imitators of them who through faith and long-suffering inherit the promises."

The words suggest a few thoughts concerning the *holy dead.*

I. They have reached **a very elevated position.** They "inherit the promises." The promises, how comprehensive, numerous, and glorious!

First. They embrace *vast possessions.* It is an inheritance, "incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away." What inheritance is that—how extensive, how fruitful, how enduring! It involves mansions, cities, etc., etc.

Secondly. They embrace *sublime fellowships.* What are the fellowships? The great and good men of all ages, the universe of angelic intelligences, Christ the Mediator of the new covenant, and God the Judge of all.

Thirdly. They embrace the most *perfect enjoyments.* "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to fountains of living waters."

Fourthly. They embrace *celestial royalties.* They speak of thrones, dominions, and powers, of sitting down on the throne with Christ, of being made kings and priests unto God.

Such is the exalted position which the holy dead have reached. They have not gone out of existence, but are living and conscious, and are in possession of riches, joys, involving an eternal weight of glory.

II. They have reached an elevated position **through a certain course of spiritual conduct.** "Who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

First. "Through *faith.*" Faith in what? Not merely in doctrines, however divine, or in facts, however glorious, but in a *Person*, and that Person Christ. "He that believeth in Me." A strong unwavering practical trust in Christ as the All-wise, All-loving, Almighty Saviour, is the faith that conducted them to their exalted positions.

Secondly. Through "*patience.*" Patience im-

plies *sensibility*. There is a hardness of nature, a natural stoicism, that is often confounded with patience; but it has nothing to do with it. Where there is no tender susceptibility there can be no patience. Patience implies *suffering*. Sensibility may exist, and yet without suffering there could be no patience. Patience implies *waiting*. It is an endurance. It has its eye and heart on coming deliverance. Those who inherit the promises were men, while here, of *sensibility*, *suffering*, and *endurance*. "Ye have need of patience," etc. This is the path to that exalted state, it has to be reached, not by learning, not by ceremonies, not by merits, not by occasional services, but by "faith and patience," trust in Christ and patient endurance.

III. The course of spiritual conduct by which they reached their exalted position, **is binding on all survivors**. "That ye be not slothful, but *followers* of them."

First. We must *imitate* them. We must have their "faith and patience." Our patience must be like theirs; in its object, faith, constancy, and practical influence. Our patience must be like theirs; we must bear up with a holy magnanimity under all the trials and sufferings of this life, awaiting the great deliverance.

Secondly. We must imitate them with *earnestness*. "Be not slothful." In truth, without earnestness we shall never imitate them at all;

"faith and patience" require earnestness in order to attain, preserve, and strengthen.

CONCLUSION.—"Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

CHRIST REALIZED, THE GROUND OF ANTICIPATED GLORY—HEAVEN.

BY THE REV. W. R. PERCIVAL.

"*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*"—COL. i. 27.

TAKEN out of the glorious context, in which the setting of this gem is so precious, these words convey an entirety of meaning, which may find some portion of the expression of itself in the title we have given to this subject.

I. The Christ of Scripture is presented to us. "The image of the invisible God," of whom it is declared that, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," is the glorious object the Bible continually, directly, and indirectly presents to us.

First: *In prophetic anticipation.* The Divine character is ever represented by human attributes in every recorded ante-Christian age; so that a

divine humanity was in some sense understood by all those who are declared to have given witness to Christ. "Search and see."

Secondly: *In actual human life.* Most real was that grand human life of Christ. To us it ever seems that that almighty heart longed to pour itself out for man; was strengthened till His work was accomplished. And then, when the hour came, and His heart broke and poured forth a cataract of love on sin-soiled humanity, He found relief, and cried, "It is finished."

Thirdly: *In apostolical realization.* From the doubtful period of "Art thou he that should come?" to the time of full flowing faith declaring itself in the gushing "My Lord and my God," many realized to themselves the Christ of God.

II. The Christ of Scripture became to us the Christ of the mind.

First: *In conscious capacity for apprehending Him.* "We have heard Him ourselves." "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

Secondly: *In the ever-growing power of realizing Him.* "Follow on to know the Lord." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Thirdly: *In the absorption of our being into His.* "That they also may be one in us."

III. The in-dwelling Christ is anticipated heaven.

First: *Incipient heaven apprehends the perfect heaven.* "Now we know in part, then shall we

know even as also *we are known.*" Imperfection grasps at perfection.

Secondly: *The humiliating termination of life only contrasts with the glorious potentialities of the consciousness.* The Christian sees the death of death in his passage into the eternally glorious land, being far off when he beholds perfectly "the King *in His beauty.*" "We shall be like Him, *for* we shall see Him as he is."

Thirdly: *Promised vision of Christ's glory is the natural completion of the whole Christian life.*

EXPERIENCE.

BY REV. R. ANDREW GRIFFIN.

Days should speak.—JOB. xxxii. 7.

EXPERIENCE is one of the most valuable possessions a man can enjoy. There are many things which can be learned in no other way. The lesson-book, however explicit and comprehensive, is not enough alone, the boy must have a teacher. The histories of nations and the biographies of men are valuable, but in order thoroughly to understand them, personal experience must come to our aid.

We purpose speaking on the subject of experience generally.

I. Experience is a possession. Too often dearly bought, and lightly valued.

To *the wise* it is wealth.

1. *A beacon.* Warning from many a rock.

2. *A repast.* True, it has its bitter herbs.

3. *A harp.* The mercies of the past put a song in his mouth.

4. *A book.* Wherein he reads of his own heart, and of a gracious God.

II. Experience is a trust. "Days *should* speak." He who knows the danger of a road—the old traveler—is bound to warn others of them.

Experienced Christians, it is your duty to rehearse all you know of the way to your younger brethren.

1. *Your past mercies.* Should be spoken of for their comfort.

2. *Your past trials.* That they may learn the blessedness of affliction.

3. *Your past success.* That they may be excited to zeal.

4. *Your past sins.* That they may "watch."

III. Experience is a recorded history. "Days *do* speak."

God has every incident of our lives before Him. Our days of sin, of sorrow, of persecution, of labor, all speak to Him. In reply he sends chastisements, comforts, promises, success.

Soldiers of the cross, the great Captain remembers your wounds and trophies. Days shall so speak to Him that He shall answer, "Well done!"

Soldiers of the cross, now your arm is nearly powerless and your fighting days nearly over call round you the recruits, and tell them what your days of conflict say—of the struggle—the Captain—the enemy.

"LET US WATCH."

BY THE REV. R. ANDREW GRIFFIN.

Let us watch.—1 THESS. v. 6.

I. A twofold necessity, or why we should watch.

1. *Enemies lurking.*

2. *The Lord approaching.*

II. A threefold inducement, or the blessings of watchfulness.

1. *The blessing of the engagement to ourselves.*

Joys of watching, communion with Christ, anticipation, reflection.

2. *The blessing of the engagement to others.* Our watchfulness shall excite others to vigilance. In watching we may comfort one another.

3. *Consider the influence of our watchfulness on the world.*

Demonstrates our sincerity; proves we believe in Christ, for we wait for Him. It attests our faith.

Exhibits our love. We thus say, "He is worth watching for."

III. A fourfold prospect, or the future of watchers.

1. *Deliverance from the perils of watching.*

2. *Accomplishment of the objects the watcher has in view.* Preventing the adversary gaining the mastery, and being ready to welcome the Lord.

3. *Admission into heaven.*

4. *Reception of rewards.*

SUBJECT—HUMAN LIFE A WEAVING.

BY THE REV. W. WHEELER.

I have cut off like a weaver my life.—Isa. xxxviii. 12.

THAT is, as the weaver cuts off from his loom, and gives to his master, the piece of cloth that he has woven; so do I my life. Thus, human life is a weaving, and the image is instructive. Note here:—

First: That however death is feared and resisted, it is most by those who are in the midst of their days; children are soon resigned to it, and so are aged people, but not so the middle-aged. The reasons for this are worth looking into. Note:—

Secondly: That man's most solemn words are uttered when he stands face to face with death; then, if ever, he forms a right estimate of life, and of preparation for dying. Note:—

Thirdly: That prayer is a real power. Here it adds fifteen years to a man's life, and the sun receives God's orders to assure him of the boon. Hence this chapter is a history, an elegy, and an anthem. The text is part of the elegy, and the subject is, Human Life a Weaving.

I. It is worth while looking at the work itself. Now what is this? *The formation of personal character.* Distinguish between character and reputation. There are two great elements which might well correspond with the weaver's warp and woof. (Describe each of these.) The first may represent the principles of Scriptural trust in God; pardon, providence, etc. These, like the weaver's warp, are strong and firmly fixed. The second are our own daily deeds. Each is a thread, woven into the character; both are necessary in cloth-making; so are faith and works, in character weaving. Now observe about this work what it is.

First: The weaver's own. I do not mean that the *materials*, either before or after they are made up, belong to him, but the work itself. A thousand weavers may use the same wool in common, while the work of each will be the product of each individual workman. Now this is a solemn fact in character weaving. Every man is making and must make, his own; nobody can make it for him, nor can God give it him. His character is his own moral self. With regard

to the materials, motives, passions, energies, influences, etc., we are God's workmanship, but in the direction we give these, and the use we make of them, we are co-workers with God. He works in us "to will and to do;" but it is we who "will and do" ourselves, and thus work out our own salvation. How solemn then such Scriptures as Rev. xxii. 12.

Secondly: It is a work of increasing progress. That is, the weaving is always going on. We have to choose, not whether the work shall go on, but only whether the work shall be good or bad. Think of a man going to his loom for days, months, years; throwing the shuttle backwards and forwards without a thread in it. *This* would be foolish enough; but there *is a thread.* We are never idle in *this* work.

Thirdly: It is a work of growing ease; it is difficult at first, but soon, and in proportion to the weaver's assiduity, he becomes dexterous, and may sing all day at his loom; aye, and he shall have plenty to sing about too! So it is with character weaving.

Fourthly: It is a work of changeful feeling. We may be full of joy or grief, gaiety or gloom, only let the work go on. The finest cloth is often woven while we weep. Poor Job! (Job. vii. 6.) You little thought what was in your loom then! Why, every age admires that work of yours! Spent without hope—Job! You did

not say so when you had *done*, you do not say so *now*. Now, Christian weaver, do not think too much of your frames and feelings.

II. **It is worth while looking at the materials.** These are the doctrines of truth, all the agencies of the Spirit, and particularly all the events of life, all the calls to self-denial, duty, trust, and righteousness which our lot furnishes. Now, observe, of them—First: They are like the weaver's wool, all supplied by the Master. "Thou shalt choose our inheritance for us." It is His to give us these, ours to *use* them. Their value is not in the having, but in the using. And mark, too, the Master gives that material which best suits the workman. To one He gave one talent, to another two, to another five, to another ten, according to each man's several ability, and went His way. And observe, too, that the Master's absence is the best test of the workman's fidelity. Secondly: They are *only* materials after all. They are valuable for the cloth's sake, rather than for themselves. 'Tis not the chessmen in which lies the value, but in the playing them. The master gives to one workman black wool, to another blue, scarlet, yellow, etc.; to one coarse, to another fine, etc. Don't envy and fight about the materials, only work them. The man that works the *worst* material *best*, shall have the best pay and praise, and *vice versa*. Always remember that the *part* you play in life's drama is the choice of God, the

manner of playing it alone is yours. Let all your pains, skill, toil, etc., be bent solely on this. The beggar acting naturally is loaded with applause, though in rags, while the king acting badly is hissed off the stage, though in robes. Think well on this; no providential event, no impression from without, no impulse from within, is in itself either good or evil, until the will takes it up and makes it into self-sustenance. Just as food is valuable, not for itself, but for its nutriment, so are all events, actions, purposes, feelings, etc. Character gets its nutriment out of them. They have worth only as they afford this. Every deed done by our hands is a seed dropped into our*self* Out of events, grow deeds; out of deeds, dispositions; out of dispositions, habits; and these constitute our personal character or moral self. These materials are abundant. The master never lacks them so that work should be short. Every workman has his hands full.—(*Keble's Morning Hymn, v. 7.*)

III. **It is worth while looking at the end.** *The end.* "I have cut off," etc. Now here observe:—First: The fabric lasts forever. Cloth wears out, character does not. (Rev. xxii. 11–12; xxi. 5–8.) Secondly: The work is over at death The loom must then stop forever. No unpicking bad work, finished or unfinished, bad or good. The shuttle is still, and the shears cut off the cloth and it is delivered up. Thirdly: The *Master*

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inspects it. Here, reputation will be nothing; character, all. It will be held up to the sun, εἰλικρίνεια. Fourthly: The Master disposes of it according *to its worth.* (Matt. xxv. 46, etc.) Now, in reviewing all this, think, First: What a mercy it is we are spared and furnished for this work! How immense our obligations to Christ! to the Spirit! to Providence!

Secondly: What a motive to begin to work early! If all we have wrought here is to be exhibited there, what shall we say of early life spent in wicked weaving? Will there be regrets, tears, in Heaven on its review? Thirdly: How soon shall we have nothing but our work left? Wealth, poverty, health, sickness, etc., etc., all will be left behind but this! How soon, if we have wrought well, shall we begin to exult forever!

PART OF AN ADDRESS

BY JOHN HALL, D.D., LL.D., AT THE FUNERAL OF AN EDITOR.

EIGHTY-FIVE years of busy life closed upon earth forever!

And now, dear friends, mourners over a distinguished fellow-citizen, it only remains for me to reveal the truths which have been read, and which, explain it as you will, compel attention to

themselves all over Christendom when we are face to face with death. By man came death as a penalty and a terror; by man came life as accepted with God and enjoyment in his presence. One man's disobedience; one man's obedience. Let us make sure that we know and accept the terms in which this life is given. Let us do it truly, assuredly, with brain and heart, with reason and courage. Laws of nature are never broken with impunity. Real grace, too, has its laws. To rebel is bad enough; it is worse still, when the hand of rebellion is impotent, to disregard the urgency of mercy, and to trample on the offer of peace and reconciliation. Let us not, free agents as we are in this, constrain God to say, "I called, but ye refused. I stretched out my hand, but ye did not regard."

I speak to many who are strong and energetic, apt to wield influence over others. Oh, try to make it influence of the best kind. Try to have human purposes purified and regulated, converse with divine. Lift your deeds out of the plane of common and transient incidents by doing them with conscious thought of what God would have you do. You cannot but be men, with men's cares, burdens and temptations, but oh, be true men in alliance with the true God, and as true ever more to the truth of things, you bear the name and venerate the character of Christ. If he is to be venerated, He is to be believed when

he says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Come by Him. Life is very weary and irksome to many of you. Even when you are envied for apparent success, you know how often you have heartaches, and are sick of yourselves. So it must ever be with men, and the stronger they are the keener their misery. The life above must be held in view to correct the errors and to balance the defects of this. Get inward health from the Great Physician. Lose no time about it. Life is not yours, men of business. It is a loan, and a loan upon call. You will soon have to give account. Be in the right relation to God as a believer in His word—the relation of a forgiven sinner, of a reclaimed child—then will follow the right feeling, and it will bring the right action. The inoculation of a heavenly spiritual life may seem a small thing, and its effects may not be apparent at once. God help us! How little spiritual life we have! But it tells on the whole being, and brings us into communion with God, which elevates all earthly fellowship.

When one who holds communion with the skies
Has filled his urn where the pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis even as if an angel shook his wings!
Celestial fragrance fills the circuit wide,
And tells us whence his treasure is supplied.

AFFLICTION.

"*My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord.*"—HEB. xii. 5.

MEN fail to recognize the combination and harmony of *wisdom* and *love* in all things.

That such actually exist is seen in the fact that evil connected with, or arising out of, our own nature, and evil permitted in the providence of God, are equally *intended* by Infinite benevolence for our good.

To this end,

1. The trial is especially *adapted* to our individuality of *nature* and *need;* and,

2. Is also wisely *regulated* in degree, according to our *capacity* for its endurance, and the *object* of its permission.

Consider trial in three aspects:—

I. **Subjectively.** With respect to its *nature* it involves a *fact* which must be accepted; also a *principle* which must be learnt. The recognition of the former, and the apprehension of the latter, constitute *Elements of Prayer.*

II. **Relatively.** With respect to its *media of operation.* Trial works through prayer—prayer involves trial. Trial is the sphere of prayer. Prayer is a power—it colors all events, and converts them to its use. *Almighty* in its power, because it lays hold on the Almighty One. It moves *His heart.*

III. **Objectively.** With respect to its *final*

cause, or intended issue. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience," etc. (Rom. v. 5.) It forms part of the discipline. The conflict between the two natures (Rom. vii.) *continues* till *conquered* in death. The final victory—"And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (John v. 11.)

While under trial we are encouraged by the memory and example of One who was emphatically "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Representing all *our* sorrows, all *our* grief, HE, "for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross." (Heb. xii. 2.) We must endure as seeing Him who is invisible." (Heb. xi. 27.) "Looking unto Jesus."

PRAYER IN AFFLICTION.

BY THE REV. JONATHAN EDMONDSON.

Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. JAMES V. 13.

EVERY state and condition of life has its peculiar duty, and, to use a common phrase, *that man acts in character*, who performs the duty which his particular state requires. Our text refers to a suffering state, and recommends the afflicted to engage in the duty of prayer. "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray."

Here are two things: First, an inquiry, "Is

any among you afflicted?" and, secondly, a direction, "Let him pray."

I. **Is any among you afflicted?** It is seldom that we are *all afflicted.* Though human life abounds with trouble, yet, blessed be God, there are pleasing intervals of sweet repose, wherein the mind is not only calm and tranquil, but inexpressibly happy.

There are but few families, cities, or religious assemblies, where we might not find *some* in a state of affliction. One is racked with violent and tormenting pain, so that life becomes an intolerable burden: Another is afflicted with poverty and want, another mourns the loss of a dear friend, or near relation, whom his eyes shall see no more in the land of the living: Another is afflicted with thoughtless and disobedient children, of whom he has no hope, either as to this world, or that which is to come: Another is weighed down with a load of guilt, which creates dreadful fears of future punishment: Another suffers by the persecuting spirit of such as should be his companion in the way to Zion: Another is in heaviness through manifold temptation: Another vexed in his righteous soul, at the wickedness of the wicked: And another is kept in painful bondage, through the fear of death. Even pure religion does not exempt men from affliction; for, "many are the afflictions of the righteous." Ps. xxxiv. 19.

When a minister of religion goes into a family, let him inquire, Is any among you afflicted? Then let him earnestly recommend the duty of prayer. This leads to the second part of our subject:

II. **Let him pray.** This passage misunderstood may lead to a dangerous error; namely, that prayer is never necessary but in affliction. Some men seem to understand it so, for they never pray but when they are afflicted. This important duty must be performed at other times; but it is peculiarly necessary when the spirit is weighed down by affliction. Our afflictions are often of such a nature, that none can remove them but God. They baffle human skill, and set at defiance the feeble powers of man. Let us, then, apply to God, whose wisdom, power, and goodness, extend to all the sons of men; and who can deliver out of the deepest afflictions to which human nature is subject.

Prayer in affliction implies a deep sense of our impotence; an acknowledgment of God's power; and an humble dependence upon Him for help. It abases the creature; but exalts the Creator.

In affliction we should pray for *counsel.* "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James i. 5. We never need the counsel of God so much as in affliction.

We should pray for Divine *support* in our afflictions. We are weak and feeble; but God is

strong. He has promised to help; let us plead His promise.

We should pray for a *sanctified use* of affliction. When affliction is sanctified, it promotes our good, the good of others, and the glory of God.

It is not unlawful in our afflictions to pray for *deliverance*. But when we pray for deliverance, we must pray with resignation. The time must be left to God, who knows best how long it may be necessary to prolong an affliction. And our prayers should be wisely adapted to the different cases which occur. When a case is clear, we may ask in full confidence; but when it is doubtful, we should say, *If it be thy will.* Hence, prayer for deliverance from affliction should always be expressed in humble, modest, and submissive language.

But prayer in affliction does not set aside *the use of other means.*

We are encouraged to pray in affliction, by *the example* of wise and good men in the days of old.

A disposition to pray to an invisible Power, in times of trouble, *is common to all men.*

The *character* of the Divine Being, is an encouragement to pray in affliction. He is full of compassion, and waits to do His needy creatures good. He pities men in their troubles, and His arm is stretched out to help and deliver. "Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to them that call upon thee." Ps. lxxxvi. 6.

But it is truly awful to see a man plunged into deep affliction, *without a desire to pray*. Bow down to the Governor of the universe, and say, *Thy will be done!* Then all will be well, both here and hereafter: Which may God in mercy grant unto us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

LIFE'S BALANCE SHEET.

REV. A. M. HUBLY.

"*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*"—PHIL. i. 21.

EVERY man has a profit and loss account with life; death closes the account and strikes the balance.

It is important as well as gratifying to know that at the final settlement the balance will be on the right side.

The apostle Paul could, with all confidence in the truth of the statement, say: "For me to die is gain," but only because in living he fulfilled the conditions upon which profit was made sure.

The secret of his assurance of future gain lay in present living—"For to me to live is Christ."

The act of living implies correspondence with environment.

To truly live as *man* in this world there must be correspondence with three distinct realms, viz.:

physical, intellectual, and spiritual, for *man* consists of body, mind, and soul.

Taking it for granted that Christ is the source, and also the expression of all Christian life, let us consider our text under three of its important words: "*Live.*" "*Die.*" "*Gain.*"

I. **Live.**

1. *Physically.* Holding correspondence with physical things that the body may be healthy and strong to "serve the Lord Christ." Col. iii. 24; 1 Cor. x. 31.

2. *Intellectually.* Correspondence in the realm of thought. Ephs. i. 17–18; Matt. iv. 4. See Deut. viii. 3; John i. 1. Intellectual development in the knowledge of God. John xvii. 3; John vi. 63; Col. iii. 6.

3. *Spiritually.* Corresponding with spiritual things: in the soul's environment. Here all physical and intellectual life is sanctified; here all powers of body and mind are consecrated. Here Christ rules. "There is a spirit in man," etc. Job xxxii. 8; John xiv. 17; 1 Cor. ii. 14; Rom. viii. 6 and 16. Hence the language of every Christian—"For me to live is Christ."

II. **Die.**

1. Ceasing to correspond with our physical nature.

2. Becoming dead to all things temporal.

3. Passing out of the realm of change, decay, and things that die.

4. Laying aside the body, with all its physical propensities.

5. Going to the Father. John xiii. 1.

III. **Gain.**

1. By the life of the real man being perfectly redeemed from sin and death.

2. By coming to the end of probation, sorrow, and pain. Rev. vii. 16–17.

3. By an existence in perfect harmony with the divine Source of all life.

4. By the reception of rewards for faithful efforts to do God's will on earth.

5. By being with Christ! All loss will be blotted out, and forgotten. "*The Balance—All Gain!*"

HUMANITY IN HEAVEN.

BY REV. DAVID THOMAS.

"*And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne.*"—REV. vii. 13–15.

THERE is one book, and but one, that presents to us *humanity in heaven*, and that is the Bible. This passage gives us a vision of unnumbered multitudes of men who once traversed this earthly scene of sin and sorrow, now in the

bright world of the good. It teaches three facts concerning them.

I. **That their earthly life was distinguished by trial.** An "elder" in those high realms of blessedness—struck, it may be, with certain peculiarities in their appearance and worship—puts to John the interrogatory what they were, and whence they came, and the reply he receives is, that they had come out of great tribulation, etc. *Tribulation is the common lot of humanity, and ever the discipline of the good.*

1. *This should teach us contentment under our trials.* "No temptation has happened unto us," etc.

2. *This should inspire us with magnanimity under our trials.* These tribulations are useful. Like the gales of the mariner, they bear us away from scenes on which our heart are set. The darkest thunder-cloud terrifies but for an hour; it soon passes away, and leaves the air clearer and the heavens brighter than before.

II. **That their celestial circumstances are pre-eminently glorious.** Look at their *appearance—employment — companionship—blessedness.* They are "in white robes," emblems of purity and conquest; they are "before the throne,"—a situation of high dignity in the Divine Empire; they "serve him day and night,"—indicating the entire consecration of their time and powers; "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them"—

they enjoy intimate communion with the Sovereign of all; "they hunger no more," etc.;—they are freed from evil, and brought into the full enjoyment of all blessings.

III. **That the difference between the earthly and heavenly condition is attributable to Christ.** They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. **Therefore** are they before the throne. Three things are here implied:—*that they were originally polluted; that the death of Christ has a purifying influence; and that their cleansing by this influence had taken place when on earth.*

Ye modern Pharisees, who base your hope of heaven upon your own works; ye children of superstition and priestly imposition, who anticipate heaven because of your connection with the ceremonies of certain churches; ye thoughtless worldlings, who ground your expectation of a happy futurity on the mercy of the everlasting Father; mark well the **therefore** of the text. Why is this "great multitude, which no man could number," in heaven? Because they were great patriots who had battled for their country's political weal?—or philanthropists, who had made sacrifices for the improvement and elevation of their race?—or eminent seers, who, standing on the mount of prophecy, pointed their generation to glorious events that were marching on?—or sages, who explored vast regions of truth, and

propounded discoveries that helped on humanity in its career of intelligence and civilization?—or men, who preached eloquently, prayed earnestly, and lived morally? No; no; and again no. All these things are good, and in heaven they will have their reward. But *Christ is the reason of men's heaven.* Every human spirit traces its heaven up to Christ. *Therefore* are they, etc.

MAN'S EARTHLY MODE OF BEING.

BY THE REV. DAVID THOMAS.

"Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance."—2 PET. i. 13–15.

WE have here a view of our *earthly mode* of being. The body is not *us*, it is *ours*—our residence; a residence not built of marble, and founded on rock, but a temporary "booth," pitched here during our short pilgrimage, rocking in every breeze, and destined to come down.

I. **Here is a felt duty connected with this mode of being.** "I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up," etc. What was the work the apostle felt he had to do? *The spiritual excitation of the Christian soul.* He sought to put Christians in mind of five *things*

which he refers to in the context :—*That spiritual excellence is the great end of Christianity* (3d and 4th verses) ; *that spiritual excellence is progressive in its nature* (5th and 7th verses) ;—*that it requires very diligent cultivation* (5th and 10th verses) ;—*that it is the only guarantee of salvation* (9th verse) ; and *that it will ultimately meet with a glorious reward* (11th verse).

Now, there are three important things implied in the apostle's aim :—

1. A paramount necessity for the Christian ever to feel these things. His own progress and the conversion of the world depend upon this.

2. A sad tendency in the Christian to forget these things.

3. An obligation which one Christian has to endeavor spiritually to excite others by these things.

II. **A destined change that awaits this mode of being.** "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle." There are three things to be observed here :—

1. *The nature of the change.* It is a putting off the tabernacle. It is but the soldier laying by his panoply, or the tenant changing his house.

2. *The nearness of the change.* "Shortly."

3. *The assurance of the change.* "Knowing." It is not a subject of doubt.

III. **A glorious cause that must outlive this mode of being.** "Moreover I will endeavor that

ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." Three things implied:—

1. *The necessity of Christianity to posterity.* All generations require it; therefore it must be handed down.

2. *The felt interest of the good in posterity.* They are far more anxious to bequeath truth and godliness than estates or empires.

3. *The capacity of men to help posterity.* Through a holy life, and instructions oral or written. A book is a kind of ark, which will convey a man's thoughts, sympathies, and soul, over the flood of centuries to new generations of men.

Properly estimate, my Christian friend, *thy mortal mode of life.* Thou art dwelling in a tabernacle. I would not have thee ascetically to despise thy body, for it is the workmanship of God; an exquisite instrument of the soul; that through which it receives and communicates; the *inlet* of the material, and the *outlet* of the spiritual. But I would have thee to remember that it is not *thyself*, but a temporary habitation of that soul of thine, which is identified with a gospel in which the universe is interested, and upon which the salvation of the race depends. Realize the vastness of the work thou hast to do while in thy frail tabernacle, and do it; and then thou shalt put it off, as the conqueror doffs his armor, with

exultant heart;—then thou shalt pass away from earth

> "As sets the morning-star, which goes not down
> Behind the darkened west, nor hides obscured
> Among the tempests of the sky, but melts away
> Into the light of heaven."

THE DEATH OF OUR FRIENDS.

BY THE REV. GEO. B. SHOEMAKER.

Text. *Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth*—MATT. ix.-24.

INTRODUCTION.

1. The Master is in the house of a ruler whose child is dead. He says she is sleeping. They laugh. Christ brings her to life.

2. The Christ knew better than they did and revealed His thought to them. The same conditions of mind exist to-day, and many mourn, who, if they would seek the truth of God, might be comforted.

I. **Some would say. "It is a painful and terrible thing to die."** Not so.

1. *Death* is not painful. It is *disease* that causes this body to suffer. Death is a relief from physical pain.

2. The experience of our dying friends prove this. Wm. Hunter said while dying. "If I had

strength to hold a pen, I would write how easy and delightful it is to die."

3. The sting of death is in a rejected Christ, a wasted life, a lost soul.

II. **Some would teach that the death of our friends is an absolute loss of them to us.** Not so.

1. Their material things keep them constantly with us. A path, a tree, a book, a garment, a picture, a bit of handiwork, all speak to us of them. And could all these outward manifestations be removed,

2. They still live with us in memory. "They never quite leave us, these friends of the past."

3. Not only their memory, but *the influence of their lives remains*, hence they are not lost to us.

Death cannot destroy a mother's prayer, a father's counsel, a sister's entreaty, a brother's sympathy, a child's love.

4. They are not lost to us, *because they still live.* In an especially blessed sense is this true of the Christian dead. Why may they not remember us. The rich man in Hades remembered his brothers, why may not our loved in Paradise think of us? Jesus said, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

5. But they are not lost to us, *because we shall see them again.*

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done

good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. Jno. v. 28, 29. Shall yours be a resurrection to life?

JESUS ONLY.

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.—S. MATTHEW, xvii. 8.

BY THE REV. J. B. C. MURPHY.

THE three Evangelists who have recorded that stupendous event, the Transfiguration of our blessed Lord, tell us that when all was over—when the voice of the Almighty, speaking in human accents, heard by human ears, had ceased, and when the overshadowing cloud had passed away, the three disciples, who had fallen to the earth in terror, arose, and, looking round, saw no man "save Jesus only!"

I commend the words to you—to be taken by you as your motto in this life—your war-cry in the world's "broad field of battle"—and then, when life's brief day is closing and death's dark night drawing on apace, to be your passport into the life beyond.

Take them as your motto. Old families have their motto, of which they are justly proud—words which in olden days of chivalry the founder of the family chose as his watchword, and with which, engraved on crest and shield, he rode

forth to do nobly for God and man. And now, in time-hallowed halls, on blood-stained banner, and on dented shield, the old words may still be traced, words that incite all true sons of the noble house to emulate the virtues of ancestors long dead.

Here, then, is a motto for you—there never was a better. The motto of the old Christian family. Great saints of God have borne it, loved it, died for it—Jesus only!

There is a password needed by souls that from the din and strife of this world would enter into the pearly gates of "Jerusalem the Golden," and there is but one. It is, "Jesus only!" King and pauper, saint and sinner, must each knock there, with these words and no other, "Jesus only!"

THE CHRISTIAN FUTURE.

BY THE REV. D. J. WILLIAMS.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.—REV. xiv. 13.

REASON and speculation can do but little towards removing the veil that hides from our view the mystery of the future. They can present nothing beyond feeble analogies and uncertain conjectures, which appear to be contradicted by many facts. But while reason has ever

spoken with feeble and faltering voice on the subject, the divine word has spoken with a positiveness that inspires confidence.

I. **This revelation is from heaven.** John tells us that he "heard a voice from heaven." (He was not listening to guesses of his own mind.) It was from heaven alone that any certainty could come. The voices of earth confuse and discourage faith.

II. **It is a revelation of permanent value.** A mere voice might have died on the air, or even if its utterances had been conveyed from mouth to mouth during the first generations, they would have been in danger of distortion, but to make the views they give a permanent possession to all ages, John was commanded to write them.

III. **It is a revelation full of comfort.** It teaches us wherein the blessedness of those "who die in the Lord" consists. They are delivered from the trials and hardships of the present life. They shall "rest from their *labors*." Labor means strained and painful activity. This ceases in the blessed life. But the repose of God's saints is not described as a state of idleness, for we are told that "their works do follow them." They are still working in the line of their work here, but it is a toilless, frictionless, and blessed activity, which is the essential condition of true blessedness. Their work will be

forever unimpeded and harmonious like a song without any jar or discord in it.

Such a heaven as this is in harmony with the laws of our nature—it depends on character, and it will consist in the free and unhindered exercise of our powers in the line of the holy desires which we cherish on earth. The heaven of the New Testament is a very different heaven from that we often hear described from some pulpits. It is a blessed state, because it is one of perfect repose, and it is a perfect repose because it is one of frictionless activity in the service we love on earth.

THE GRAVE.

Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled: and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.—Isa. v. 14–16.

"HELL," here, has not the meaning which we attach to it now. It stands not for future punishment. The word *Sheol* in Hebrew, *Hades* in Greek, and "Hell" in this verse, represent the place of the dead—the grave. This place of the dead is spoken of in the Bible as a very *deep* place. (Deut. xxxii. 22; Job. xi. 8; Psa. cxxxix. 7, 8.) As a very *dark* place. (Job.

x. 21, 22.) And as a place having gates into it. Isa. xxxviii. 10.) The passage leads us to consider:—

I. **The growing power of the grave.** Hell, or the grave, is here represented as having "enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure." The words refer, undoubtedly, to a period when, through famine, pestilence, or war, mortality was on the increase. The mouth of the grave is not fixed to take so many in, in a day, and no more; it is expanding every hour; as the population of the world increases, the mouth of the grave widens. It is wider perhaps to-day than ever. This increase of mortality teaches us: First: *The fruitlessness of all human efforts to avert death.* Men have been struggling against death for six thousand years, and his dominion is wider to-day than ever. Civilization and science have done wonders, but they have no effect on death. Death moves on, etc. It teaches: Secondly: *How soon we shall be in the grave-world.* The mouth is opening for us; it is yawning at our feet. Let us, through a true faith in Christ, a holy life, make ready for the period when we shall go down into the awful depths of darkness, silence, and retribution.

II. **The leveling power of the grave.** "And their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. And the mean man shall be brought down, and the

mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled." The man of magnificence, whose glory dazzles the eyes of his generation, whose pomp and pageantry attract the wondering crowds, he must fall into the mouth of this grave. "The multitude," the numerous hosts of laborers, tradesmen, artisans, merchants, and warriors, must fall into its mouth; he that "rejoiceth as well as he that sorrows," he that is "mean" as well as he that is "mighty," must fall into its mouth. Learn from this: First: *How foolish it is to be proud of adventitious distinctions.* They are only as flowers of the field, evanescent forms, and hues that variegate the common grass. Secondly: *How important to seek an alliance with the eternally great and good.* Seek "a city which hath foundations, a kingdom that cannot be shaken,—a source of joy that shall spring up as a well of water into everlasting life, a treasure that neither moth nor rust can corrupt, etc.

III. **The eternal sovereign of the grave.** "But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness." First: *He survives all dissolutions.* He sees generations, like an ever-rolling river, with the pomp of courts and the grandeur of kingdoms, like bubbles on its bosom, flowing into the mouth of this open grave, and He remains the same. He will see the grave exhaust that river, drinking

in the last drop, and He will remain unchanged. Death hath no power over Him. He is the Eternal. "From everlasting to everlasting," etc. Secondly: *He will be increasingly honored.* "The Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment." As the ages flow on, He will so reveal His character to man's consciousness, that men will exalt and extol Him on account of His moral glory.

"Give me, O Father, to thy throne access,
Unshaken seat of endless happiness!
Give me, unveil'd, the source of good to see;
Give me Thy light, and fix mine eyes on Thee."

—BOETHIUS.

THOU SHALT DIE.

BY THE REV. E. W. ANNABLE.

Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.—2 KINGS. XX. 1.

WE remain to sorrow and question. God has given reason, but Bible truth is distorted by training and teaching.

I. **Material death reckoned as punishment** for Adam's transgression. Investigation proves otherwise. Death, divinely ordained, Death of vast forests, primeval, and strange animals.

Human nature comes under same dominion. The curse touched not animal existence, or Adam had immediately perished. It affected

the true man. Our bodies are our rented houses. Through sin—rebellion, the true inner being.

One universal law of God manifest: for material creations: beginning, growth, fruitage, death.

One universal law for spiritual creations: Life. Keen spiritual conceptions enable man to keep law. To set aside this law brings us within sentence of spiritual death.

God's purpose is growth in life. The plant, the tiny egg, the grub, the chrysalis, the butterfly.

II. **We in intermediate state called death.** We struggle like unhatched bird. Our powers curtailed by environment. We seek expression in every new invention, but too slow. The heart outruns the telegraph. The shell called "flesh" restrains. God has a higher sphere for these heart-yearnings and aspirations.

III. **Why, then, fear death?**

1. We have refused heavenly aspirations, denied them, killed by inches.

2. Paralyzed spiritual eye, ear, hand of faith, through disuse. We are "bodies of death," living sepulchers, full of remains of dead heavenly powers.

3. We know death will bring us to a life for which not prepared. Our house not set in order. Hence we fear death.

IV. If, however, we have conformed to God's law, **death only an orderly step.** Death may terminate this life, but we move henceforth in

grander circles. Death, God's messenger, releasing from environment, and bring us into glories of eternal world.

What glorious light this gives on problem of death. Weep not for loved ones gone before! "A few more gasps of earth's heavy atmosphere, and then the full breathing of the life-giving air of eternal home."

What seemed an interruption, an end, only the beginning of life to the true man—only the dawning of a glorious day, if we could see aright.

Oh, that some hearer would heed the words of the text, seize the opportunity, hear the warning message:—"Set thine house in order," etc.

This mortality must in time be put off by each. May we have our work well in hand when death shall bring us into the presence of the Judge of all the earth.

SUBMISSION UNDER AFFLICTION.

"*Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*"—JOB. ii. 10.

THE patriarch, though writhing in the agony of sudden and multiplied bereavements, and under the pressure of sore and irritating disease, made this noble reply.

Consider:—

I. The sentiment of this inquiry. May define

evil as something done to or suffered by us, which is contrary to the original purpose of God in our creation, and to the original constitution of our nature.

There are different kinds of evil:—

1. There is sin, or moral evil. Man was created to love and to glorify his Maker. Every infraction of this purpose is a sin, an "evil." 1 Kings xvi. 25.

2. There is physical evil—the numberless pains, infirmities, and sufferings of life. These formed no part of God's primeval plan; they are therefore called "evil."

3. The afflictions and calamities which befall men, as punishments by God, are "evil" in the sense of penal evil. "I make peace and create evil."

Job refers to his painful bereavements, loss of property, and acute disease.

All evil is either sin in itself, or sin in its consequences.

But though the evidence of sin exists, and the penalty of its commission, afflictions may be overruled to moral advantage. The chastisement is sanctified, and out of evil God brings good. Ps. cxix. 71; Heb. xii. 11.

Shall we who forfeited all rights to the blessings of Providence receive only good from God, and be exempt from evils which for our sins we most righteously deserve?

II. **The reasonableness of this sentiment.** This is seen from the following considerations :—

1. *We deserve evil.*—We have "sinned and committed iniquity and done wickedly and rebelled, by departing from the precepts and the judgments" of the Lord. We have been guilty of ingratitude to God. We have been unfaithful stewards of his gift.

God has not sent upon us the evil our sins deserve. Job. xi. 6; Ps. ciii. 10.

2. *We often incur evil by our own conduct.* The evil courses men pursue bring sorrow, and disaster, disease, and difficulties. Jer. ii. 19.

A large amount of human suffering is traceable to sheer folly and imprudence, to hasty decision, and strong passion. Ills spring out of the indulgence of vanity, love of pleasure, money, fashion, novelty, and applause, the disregard of God's will, intimations of Providence.

Many sorrows may be traced up to neglect of duty.

God has given us laws and motives adapted to our nature, circumstances, and powers. We cannot require of Him to prevent moral evil. Gal. vi. 7.

3. *We are in a state of probation.*—A state of trial without privation, suffering, or conflict is an absurdity. Alternations of good and evil constitute a part of the Divine system of moral discipline. They form a test of character, a trial of principles, a sifting of motives.

They are designed to promote our moral improvement, they discover unsubdued sins, and make manifest the defects of our experience.

They are often permitted to ensure our safety. Less evils are designed to prevent greater ones.

An experience of affliction and temptation will lead to more correct estimate of the Divine compassion of Christ, and will excite a more fervent and devoted affection.

III. **The spirit of this inquiry.**

1. *It is the language of devout submission.*—Job recognizes the hand of the Lord in all his trials. He acknowledges the sovereign power, wisdom, and goodness of God in his adversity as he had done in his prosperity.

2. *It is the language of heavenly hope and lofty confidence in God.*—The same spirit as the Psalmist, "though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.

In conclusion :—

1. We must seek reconciliation with God.

2. We must maintain close and sanctifying intercourse with God. Communion with God will impart to us a true knowledge of His character and of His dealings.

3. We must cultivate an increase of personal piety, in order to prepare us for future trials.

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF LIFE AND DEATH.

BY THE REV. G. L. MAICE.

"*For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*" — PHILIPPIANS i. 21.

THESE energetic words are the language of faith, experience, and hope, by St. Paul. It is true geometry cannot measure the distance, nor can astronomy define the boundaries, nor yet theology determine the locality of Heaven, the home of the soul.

But what is less tedious to acquire than the abstract rules and dogmas of science and theology, are the simple revelations of faith, the blessed realities of experience and the glorious animations of hope.

Life, death, and eternity, are said to be the three most solemn words in the English vocabulary. It is of these I wish to speak as applicable to the text and this occasion.

Let us observe.

I. **The solemnity of life.** Life is more solemn than death; to live more serious than to die. The best preparation we can make for death is to live right. We do not live to die so much as we die to live. "I am come that they might have life." The object of Christ's death was life. The Christian dies to enter the more abundant life.

"For me to live is Christ." "That which man loves supremely, is that for which he lives," is an

irrevocable law of our being; therefore love for God must be the ruling passion of our lives.

To live for Christ is a nobler thing than to die for Him. The choice that Paul made, that to abide in the flesh "is more needful for you," is proof of this.

Man becomes assimilated to the moral character of the object of his affections and devotion. Hence to love Christ supremely, and worship Him reverently, is to become like Him. This must ever be our highest ideal in life,—*Christlikeness.* We must have in us the elements of Heaven before we can reasonably expect to get to Heaven.

There must be a crucifying of the flesh before there can be a glorifying of Christ. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."

Such a life never dies, the body alone is mortal.

II. **The blessedness of Death.** "To die is gain." This is true in natural law: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." So in the spiritual. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die."

Whatever other view we may have of death as it enter the home and breaks tender ties, it nevertheless is a blessing in the light of the Gospel. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, etc."

If such are the blessed indeed, then truly death is the final blessing of sanctification.

III. **The joys of eternity.** Paul's highest summary of the Christian's life is, "to die is gain." He does not attempt to compute this gain. His best definition is that it is "an eternal weight of glory."

THE DUTY OF A GOOD MAN IN TIME OF TROUBLE.

BY THE REV. W. G. BARRETT.

But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.—DANIEL xii. 13.

CERTAIN events in the history of Daniel filled him with perplexity: about these events certain communications were made to him, which he confesses he could not understand, (verse 8); and with the curiosity which is not sinful, because it is natural, he asks how long it will be before these things shall transpire; for God's speech is now to him as mysterious as was the handwriting on the wall of the self-doomed Belshazzar: but to this question—one that each of us would have put, had we been in the same circumstances—no answer is given; no, not even to Daniel, the man greatly beloved. Instead of an answer, his perplexity is deepened by an additional prophetic message (verses 10, 11, 12), in

which the symbolical language is altered, and its prophetic mysteriousness increased ; and the conclusion of the whole matter is just this—Daniel is told to go home and stay himself upon God. There was work to be done in the *present*, though he could not decipher the future ; that future was in good keeping, and when the "end of the days" should come, he would be found safe, standing in his lot, occupying his own niche, and resting in the great thought that events were God's, but duties man's.

We consider the text as suggesting a good man's duty in a time of trouble ; and observe,

I. **That a good man's life is often passed in the midst of great events.** This was the case with Daniel. He was one of the children of the captivity—one of the royal family of Judea : he had lived to see the children of that family strangers in a strange land, and captives in the house of bondage. The dynasty of Judea had died out beneath his eye, never to rise again in its former splendor. He had seen the rise and progress of the Babylonian power, and in the progress of events, had become identified with the Babylonian court. He had risen, through marvelous gifts bestowed on him, to opulence, to renown, and to coveted esteem. He had, through faith, out of weakness waxed strong ; stopped the mouth of lions ; and put to flight armies of alien astrologers and soothsayers. In addition to all this, he was made the

medium of transmitting so much of the mind of God about the future, as is contained in this book, which bears his name; and then was honored to be teacher of the church in all ages. Thus Daniel's life was passed amid great events;—and the same may be said of all good men.

We observe, secondly,

II. **That a good man's soul is often perplexed by the variety and mysteriousness of these great events.** You see by these words that Daniel was greatly perplexed. And then he was ordered to seal the book, and shut up the words (ver. 4); but before he did so, he asked of a man clothed in linen (ver. 6), "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? A question you and I have often asked. At last he confesses that, though he heard, he understood none of these things; and so he retires to wait the will of God; and we see and hear no more of him forever.

So was Jacob perplexed, when everything seemed against him, and plot after plot of the marvelous drama of his life seemed only more intricate, more involved, and more inexplicable than ever. So was Job perplexed, when he uttered those bitter exclamations about his birth and destiny, that show us how truly great his patience was, because he had to strive against such feelings of blackness and despair. So was Asaph perplexed, as he stood in the outer court, trying to put Providence to the rack, and make

it speak according to his mind; and nothing but the silence of the sanctuary recalled him to his senses. So was Jeremiah perplexed; and in the day of his perplexity he said, "Cursed be the day in which I was born." And we, also, get perplexed very soon with what God does. When Christ goes out of sight, we stand gazing up into heaven, instead of going back to Jerusalem, and fulfilling our commission. No wonder that the angels call us at such times, "Men of Galilee," rather than men of God.

III. **But how is it that we are so perplexed with the operations of God's providence?** I answer, for two reasons: first we are not able; and secondly, we are not fit to judge: that is to say,

1. We have not the capacity. The events of time are remote in their causes, and complicate in their details, and vast in their consequences. Let us just remember this; we cannot understand God, nor find out the Almighty to perfection; therefore let us be resigned.

> "Let us be patient, these severe afflictions
> Not from the ground arise;
> But oftentimes celestial benedictions
> Assume this dark disguise.
>
> We see but dimly through these mists and vapors;
> Amid these earthly damps—
> What seem to us but funeral tapers,
> May be heaven's distant lamps."

But, 2. We are not fit. Seasons there are in which we say, with some meaning in the words,

"I will trust, and not be afraid:" many more seasons in which we say wearily, with a head aching with care, and a heart riven with sorrow, "Oh! Lord, how long shall it be to the end of all these wonders?"

So felt Daniel, and so feel we; and we love Daniel because we see he was just as weak, and just as foolish, as we are, at times; and with Daniel in our perplexities, we hear God's kind voice say, "Go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days." No! we are neither able nor fit to judge, and therefore God does not impose this more than Atlas burden on us.

Another idea associated with this text is,

IV. **That a good man's duty in the time of trouble is to wait the end of these perplexities, rather than to try and explain them.** "Go thy way till the end be." There will be an end. Let us wait until then. We are to stand by as spectators in the great drama of life in which God is all in all. Not careless or uninterested spectators; far from that, but devout and reverent beholders of the great mystery. Nor yet idle spectators either. We are to go and stand in our lot till the end of days; to go and occupy our place, and fill our niche, and do our work, and be willing after having served our generation, to die in harness, having accomplished our mission. "Go thy way, weary man, until the end be; for, if thou

art faithful to me, thou shalt never be swept away in the deluge that devours the ungodly: thou shalt be found in thy lot in the end of the days." When you and I think and feel thus—and sometimes we can—we sing afresh,

> "Howl, winds of night, your force combine;
> Without His high behest,
> Ye shall not in the mountain pine
> Disturb the sparrow's nest."

COMFORT FOR THE SORROWFUL.

For the Lord will not cast off for ever: but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, etc.—LAM. iii. 31–36.

OF the book of Lamentations, it is said by Bishop Lowth, "One would think every letter was written with a tear, every word the sound of a broken heart; that the author was a man compacted of sorrows, disciplined to grief from his infancy; one who never breathed but in sighs, nor spake but in a groan." This description is somewhat exaggerated, at least when applied to the book as a whole. Its earlier portions may convey the impression which the above writer has so eloquently expressed; but that the prophet never breathed but in sighs, nor spake but in a groan, is contradicted by the passage before us, where he indulges in a more hopeful and consolatory strain. We have—

I. **A cheering assurance given.** It embraces two particulars.

1. That God's abandonment of His people is only temporary. "For the Lord will not cast off forever."

2. That the favor with which He will visit them will be signal and abundant. "But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies."

II. **An important reason adduced.** "For He doth not afflict willingly," etc. This may be inferred from,

1. His character. He is a God of love.

2. The relationship He sustains to His people. He is their Father. An earthly parent has to chastise his offspring, but he does it with great reluctance.

3. Their sufferings are attended with many alleviations. Had He any pleasure in punishing us, so much mercy would not be mingled with judgment.

4. The object He has in view in afflicting His children. It is for their profit, that they might be partakers of His holiness.

5. His readiness to remove His chastening hand when the visitation has answered the end intended.

III. **A gracious limitation subjoined.** "To crush under His feet all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside the right of a man," etc. Whenever He afflicts, it is,

1. Within the bounds of moderation. To "crush," expresses what is extreme and destructive, Isa. xxvii. 8; Jer. x. 24; xlvi. 28.

2. Never in violation of the principles of equity. "To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not." He is the righteous Lord, that loveth righteousness, and all He doeth is in accordance therewith.

THE HOPE OF REUNION WITH THE DEPARTED A SOURCE OF CONSOLATION.

By Rev. J. P. Caldwell.

But I would not have you ignorant, etc.—1 Thess. iv. 13–18.

THESSALONIANS had recently received the Gospel; and now some of their friends have died in the faith. As they expected to remain in the body until the Lord returned, and because some had fallen asleep through Jesus, they were troubled beyond measure. To counteract this tendency to immoderate grief and trouble, the apostle consoles them with the pleasing hope of a happy and eternal reunion with the departed when the Lord appears in glory.

I. **There will be a reunion.** The dead have not perished. This separation will not be eternal. The departed will not lose anything. The living shall not precede the departed saints into the

blessedness of eternal fellowship with Jesus, ver. 15. Both shall be caught up into the clouds, ver. 17; Mark xiii. 26. And be with the Lord forever, ver. 17; John xiv. 3.

II. **The foundation for the hope of reunion beyond the grave.** This hope is built on a solid and indestructible foundation, because—

1. *It is founded on the living Christ* (ver. 14). The Lord's resurrection the foundation of hope, 1 Peter i. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 19–23.

2. *It is founded on the Lord's promised and expected return* (Ch. i. 10; Acts i. 10–11).

III. **When this hope shall be realized.** When the Lord visibly descends from heaven with great glory and power it shall be realized (ver. 16; Matt. xxiv. 30, 31).

1. God will then bring the "spirits of just men made perfect" with Him (ver. 14; Jude 14).

2. *The dead raised* (ver. 16). Before this promised reunion shall take place, the dead in Christ, must be raised with incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual bodies (1 Cor. xv. 42–44).

3. *And the living transformed* (1 Cor. xv. 51–57). Then this final, happy, and eternal reunion and association of the living and dead shall be realized.

IV. **The mutual consolation the surviving should draw from this subject.** Encourage, console, strengthen, and cheer one another (ver. 18).

1. *The bereaved consoled.* The believer in Jesus

Christ, should not, as the heathen do, in the presence of death give way to hopeless grief.

2. Do you believe Jesus died and arose from the dead? Do you believe He is alive for evermore? Do you believe what He said: "Because I live ye shall live also"? Let this belief moderate your sorrow for the dead.

3. Do you expect the Lord's return? If so, you should not be troubled about the present condition and future state of departed saints. As the Lord's death and resurrection are pledges of the resurrection and glorification of all who have died in the Lord, you should rejoice in the hope of an unending association with them in the city of God.

THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER HIGHER THAN ANY OTHER.

What do ye more than others?—MATT. v. 48.

THESE words imply a great truth, namely, that the Christian character is superior to any other character sustained by man. Four facts will show the truth of this:—

I. **It is built upon higher convictions than that of any other character.** All moral character must be resolved into beliefs of some kind or other; moral character grows out of beliefs. The Christian has higher convictions on at least three things:—

1. *The theory of duty.* He regards the will of God as the standard of all obligation.

2. *The theory of absolution.* He regards the mediation of Christ as the only ground of pardon and reconciliation with God.

3. *The theory of spiritual culture.* Belief in the gospel, righteous activity, and the agency of the Spirit. Another fact which will show the superiority of the Christian to any other is:—

II. **It is inspired by a diviner disposition than that of any other character.** All have some one presiding disposition as the fontal spring of action. The Christian's is love—*disinterested, self-sacrificing, practical, all-embracing love*:—a philanthropy like that of Christ's, springing from piety to the Infinite Father. Another fact which will show that it is higher than that of any other is:—

III. **It is engaged in a sublimer mission than that of any other character.** The Christian consecrates his energies to *the extension of Christian rectitude, the moral progress of humanity, and the working out of the divine plan in all things.*

IV. **It is molded after a higher type than that of any other character.** It is formed after the "image of God," as delineated in the transcendently glorious life of Christ. To be a Christian is to be *Christ-like*—is to be changed into His image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of God. Such,

then, is the Christian character, and gloriously true it is that—"The Christian is the highest style of man"—**Living or dying higher than any other character.**

THE MYSTERY AND MINISTRY OF SUDDEN DEATH.

BY THE REV. H. C. GRUHUERT.

Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.—Ps. xc. 3.

IT seems to be widely observed that of late sudden and unexpected deaths occur with appalling frequency, as well among those in the bloom and prime of life as among the aged. An inquiry into the physical causes of this observation would no doubt yield important and instructive results. But it is not for us, here and now, to engage in those researches; our task is to turn to the Word of God for doctrine, consolation and admonition.

I. **The mystery of sudden death.**

1. *Its terrible aspects*: the abrupt extinction of life in itself; the blow it inflicts on family and friends; its often momentous and even apparently disastrous effects upon social, business, and family relations.

2. *The solemn warnings* it is fraught with; of our own impotency and frailty; our "destructibleness." (Text.)

3. *The questions it awakens* within us, as to meaning and value of life: is life worth living? is God really mindful of us, or are we the prey of mere accident, of blind fate? whither shall we turn for light out of this gloom?

II. **The ministry of sudden death.**

1. *Doctrine:* It is God's working; *He* "turneth man to destruction" and says "Return." Our utter dependence on Him; the folly of a life occupied merely with worldly pursuits.

2. *Admonition:* It makes us realize our responsibility to God for our actions, words, and thoughts; it warns us to keep in perpetual readiness, to watch and pray.

3. *Consolation:* Being the issue of divine wisdom, both in justice and love, sudden death is *always timely*, though we may not see it so. This yields comfort to the mourning, knowing their departed ones to be in God's care, and themselves under His chastening, loving hands; thus their hearts are drawn even through the terrible affliction towards God's love in Christ, the comfort we have in Christ (2 Cor. i. 4–6); they are strengthened by the lively hope of everlasting life, resting on the risen Christ, if they but believe that God can only love them, and if they submit to His holy will.

THE NATURE OF THE HEAVENLY RECOMPENSE EXPLAINED.

He had respect unto the recompense of reward.—HEB. xi. 26.

IN this chapter, the inspired penman of this epistle sets before the Jewish converts to Christianity, a variety of illustrious examples of faith, under the Old Testament dispensation; and shows them what eminent acts of obedience it enabled them to perform, and for which they were renowned in their several ages. Among these, Moses is a memorable instance; the first-fruit and evidence of his faith mentioned by the apostle, is his singular self-denial. By faith he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and only child, as Josephus tells us. "She was called," says he, "Thermutis, and had adopted Moses to be her son, and given him a princely education;" for Stephen asserts, that "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds," Acts vii. 22. And when he was full forty years old, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and therein renounced all the honors, and pleasures, and riches of the Egyptian court, which, at that time, was superior to any other court in the world for wealth and grandeur. This he did, not from any peevish, ungrateful principle, but from faith in the promises God had made to the patriarchs, and earnest desire personally to share with them

in the ample blessings promised, especially the happiness of heaven, typified by Canaan. He knew that he could not inherit the crown of Egypt without forsaking God and renouncing the true religion; and therefore he preferred and chose a state of afflicted piety, before the dignities and pleasures of Egypt.

In the text, we have the ground of this his signal self-denial;—"for he had respect to the recompense of reward;" that is, he looked away from the things of time, to the giving or rendering of the reward. The eye of his mind was turned away from the treasures of Egypt to the treasures in heaven. He looked by faith and hope to the happiness of the future state, which includes more glorious honors, sweeter pleasures, and richer treasures, than all the courts in this world can afford. His believing prospect of these future and superior excellences, was the ground and motive of his self-denial. Here we may observe, that in the service of God we may and ought to have respect to the recompense of reward, it is not criminal and mercenary, as some imagine, but lawful, and our duty.

In treating of this subject, we shall endeavor **to explain the nature of this recompense of reward.** And, in a word, it is the happiness of the heavenly state consisting in four things, which we shall briefly mention.

1. *The happiness of the heavenly state consists*

in the complete vision of God. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," Matt. v. 8. "When Christ shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 2. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face," 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Though the vision of God in heaven be not comprehensible (for that is impossible to finite creatures), yet it is beatifical, replenishing, and satisfying to every desire of the soul.

2. *In the full possession and enjoyment of God.* Here in this life much of him is enjoyed in the promises of the covenant, first-fruits of the Spirit, and spiritual ordinances; but this enjoyment is mediate and imperfect; in heaven it is immediate and full; every faculty of the soul is filled with as large a portion of divine manifestation as the whole capacity thereof is able to contain.

3. *In the most perfect similitude and transformation into the likeness of God in holiness and love, of which glorified saints are capable.* "When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness," Ps. xvii. 15. "We shall be like him," 1 John iii. 2. The moral image of God shall be fully impressed upon the saints; for there is a glory to be revealed in them as well as to them, Rom. viii. 18.

4. *In complete satisfaction and delight, arising from all the former.* "In His presence there is fulness of joy," Ps. xvi. 11. In heaven God is clearly seen, fully enjoyed, and the soul im-

pressed with His likeness, whence arise complete satisfaction and unspeakable blessedness; and the body, when raised from the dead, and brought thither, will be endued with incorruptibility, spirituality, power, and glory, 1 Cor. xv. 15, 42–44, in a conformity to the glorified body of Christ, Phil. iii. 21. This now is the recompense of reward that we may and ought to have respect to in our serving God. And it is a *sure* reward to all God's faithful servants;—"To him that soweth righteousness, shall be a sure reward," Prov. xi. 18. It is founded on immutable love, an invaluable purchase, and unquestionably faithful promises, of which true believers in Christ have the earnest in themselves, (Eph. i. 14,) and possession already in their glorified Head, the Lord Jesus Heb. vi. 20. It is a *great* reward; it must be so, since God himself is the reward;—"Fear not, Abraham, for I am thy exceeding great reward," Gen. xv. 1. It is a *full* reward, 2 John 8. It leaves no sin or sorrow unremoved, no desire unsatisfied, no faculty unreplenished. It is *eternal:* for "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him," Ps. ciii. 17: so long as God exists, shall those possessed of this reward continue in the enjoyment of it, without decay in itself, or dislike to them. It is impossible that the enjoyment of the highest and greatest good should ever be disrelished by the graciously prepared possessors thereof.

We see hence the necessity of being accepted of God on the ground of Christ's sacrifice, of deadness to the present world, and of religious diligence and exertion, in company with the religious, so that we may enjoy a pleasing hope and well-grounded assurance of possessing this vast recompense of reward beyond the grave. All other objects are comparatively trivial, and of but little moment: but *heaven* is a consideration the most sublime—adapted to the utmost reach of our faculties—can satisfy our largest hopes—and will be commensurate with our existence. Here let our minds rest, and to this point let our strongest and most lively energies be constantly directed.

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HAVING RESPECT TO A FUTURE RECOMPENSE JUSTIFIABLE ON SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

"*He had respect unto the recompense of reward.*"—HEB. xi. 26.

TO be influenced in religion by right views and motives, at once equally remote both from base self and bold presumption, is necessary and beneficial. We cannot do better than adopt the sentiments, and copy the example, of those saints whose character is on record in the inspired writings. Moses is an excellent pattern of faith and obedience, and in all his religious services he had respect to the recompense of reward.

I. **Prove that Christians in the service of God may and ought to have respect unto the recompense of reward.**

1. *God has proposed and promised it purposely to encourage our obedience to His commandments, and to support us under the difficulties and hardships of our Christian warfare.* See a few texts to this purpose:—2 Cor. vii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 10, 11; 1 Tim. vi. 17–19; Gal. vi. 9. In all these places it is proposed and promised as a great encouragement to obedience and holiness. It is set before us also for our support under sufferings (Matt. v. 10–12; Heb. x. 36; Rev. ii. 10). Thus we see that God has promised the recompense of reward, to encourage us both to faithful duty and cheerful suffering, to do and bear the will of God. Now to

what purpose are all these encouraging promises, if no regard must be had to the promised recompense? In a word, all who are taught by the gospel to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," are taught also to "look for the blessed hope" (Tit. ii. 11–13). And he that comes to God, must believe that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Heb. xi. 6).

2. *This has been the approved practise of the saints in all ages.* God expressly declares, that He was not ashamed to be called the God of the ancient patriarchs, because they sought a better country (than what they left on his call), "even an heavenly," (Heb. xi. 16). Moses, here in the text, had respect to the recompense of reward, and this is recorded to his honor. David says, "I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even to the end" (Ps. cxix. 112). So it is in our translation; but in the original, the words, instead of "to the end," are, "for the recompense," that is, with a view to the promised reward, and accordingly the seventy translate it; which is the end of evangelical obedience (Rom. vi. 22), and the end of faith (Pet. i. 9). Many of the faithful under the Old Testament dispensation suffered grievously, refusing to accept of deliverance on sinful conditions, that they might obtain a better resurrection (Heb. xi. 35). No man was ever more remote from a mercenary spirit than St. Paul.

yet he made the heavenly world his aim in the course of his service and sufferings (Phil. iii. 13, 14); and the prospect of it excited his courage, and supported his mind (2 Cor. iv. 16–18). Nay, the Lord Jesus himself, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross (Heb. xii. 2).

3. *The nature, necessity, and usefulness of the graces of faith and hope evince the truth of the point.* These graces have only their uses in this life, for "faith is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. xi. 1. Rom. viii. 24, 25). The recompense of reward proposed and promised is the proper object of these graces, which, when it is obtained, faith will be lost in vision, and hope in enjoyment. Therefore, unless we may look at the recompense of reward, and expect it, these graces have, in a manner, no proper objects on which to be exercised. Yet all Christians are required to live by faith; "The just shall live by faith" (Heb. x. 38): it is both their privilege and duty at the same time; and they are commanded to "hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 13). But how can faith realize the future recompense, or hope give a present subsistence to it in the mind, if we must not have respect to it?

II. **Explain in what sense this is to be understood.**

1. *We must not have respect to it as the only*

reason of our obedience, without which we would not serve God: this would be criminal, mercenary, and servile. The great reason of obedience is the authority of God; "Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently" (Ps. cxix. 4); but we may have respect to the reward as the motive and encouragement of our obedience; reasons and motives are different things.

2. *Nor must we have respect to the recompense of reward as the ultimate end of our obedience.* The glory of God being in itself the highest end, must accordingly be so to us. "All things are of Him, and through Him," and therefore should be to Him (Rom. xi. 36). Our ultimate aim in all we do in religion, or suffer for it, should be that God may be honored and glorified; "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 31; and this is the habitual aim of all serious Christians (Rom. xiv. 7, 8). St. Paul says, "To me to live in Christ" (Phil. i. 21), His honor is the highest and governing end of my life.

3. *We must not have respect to the recompense of reward as the result of our merit.* After we have done all things God has commanded us, we are to feel and confess "we are unprofitable servants," (Luke xvii. 10). After all our best services and severest sufferings for righteousness' sake, the reward is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ (Rom. vi. 23). The promise of it is an act of unmerited favor; and though it be, with respect to

the order and manner of bestowing it, called a reward, yet it is a reward of free grace, a rich and free gift, a largeness of divine bounty, purchased for us by Christ, and bestowed on us by the Father's good pleasure, in consideration of his merits. In reference to Christ, it is merit; but, as to us, it is mercy (Jude 21), so that we must have respect to it as a manifestation of God's rich bounty.

APPLICATION.

1. We may hence learn the abundant mercy and goodness of God to us, that when he might use no other argument to enforce our obedience than his own sovereign authority over us, yet is pleased to encourage us with the promise and assurance of a most glorious and inconceivably great recompense of reward.

2. Let us continually look to this recompense of reward, and, with the prospect of it, encourage ourselves to faithful duty, and cheerful suffering when called to it. A lively faith of, and due respect had to it, will draw forth all our active powers into the service of God, and inflame and feed our zeal for his glory. See 1 Cor. xv. 58. It will also fortify us against all the difficulties and sufferings of the present time (Rom. viii. 18). "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God:" but he whom we serve, and suffer for, intends to bestow on us a vast reward,

which will be an abundant recompense for all we do and suffer for his sake. Let us oppose the glory of our hopes to all the abasement of our sufferings, and, with Moses, esteem the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world.

THE LESSON OF LIFE AND DEATH.

BY REV. FREDERICK G. CURTIS.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.—PSA. XC. 12.

Wisdom is a most valuable possession. More to be desired, sought after, and prized than any earthly thing. Scripture estimate, and recommendation of Wisdom.—PROV. viii. 11; xvi. 16; iii. 13; iv. 7.

I. **The nature of Wisdom considered.**

1. As distinguished from mere knowledge. While Wisdom supposes knowledge, it implies also, the right use of it; to secure important ends by means best fitted to attain them. Some people know a great deal, but are not wise; others with less knowledge, are wise to use it to good advantage (Job. xxxii. 9; James iii. 13).

2. As derived from God. A further distinction; as there may be mere earthly wisdom, terminating on earthly objects, with no reference whatever to God and religion (James iii. 15, 17; 1 Cor. iii. 18, 19). The wisdom of God in Christ (Col. ii. 3; 1 Cor. i. 23, 24, 30).

3. As consisting in the fear of the Lord. Believing in Him; reverencing Him with filial awe; receiving His truth; serving Him with affectionate obedience. This not only glorifies Him, but serves our highest interests. We are indeed wise when we do this (Job. xxviii. 28; Psa. cxi. 10).

II. **What is meant by applying our hearts unto Wisdom.** Diligence in using the means afforded by which we may learn:

1. Prayer. Through prayer we are divinely taught and inspired (James i. 5; Eph. i. 17). The text itself, a prayer.

2. Study of Nature. The revelation of God in His works. How much we might learn if we were diligent students of nature (Psa. xix. 1, 2; Rom. i. 20).

3. Study of the Scriptures. Everything necessary for life and godliness taught us therein. The way of salvation made perfectly clear. Full instructions given us how to prepare for Death, Judgment, Heaven (Psa. xix. 7–9; 2 Tim. iii. 15–17).

4. God's Providences. He has to teach us some hard lessons sometimes. We ought to learn wisdom through losses, disappointments, bereavements. Improve the present occasion as thus intended (Hosea xiv. 9; Psa. cvii. 43).

III. **Reasons why we should apply our hearts unto Wisdom.**

1. Because of its excellency. Supposing we

knew all that this world could teach, and had all the wealth it could offer; what would that be to us, if we did not know Him whom to know is Life everlasting! (Matt. xvi. 26; Phil. iii. 7, 8).

2. Because of the brevity and uncertainty of life. Intimated in the text. Illustrated in the present instance. We have but a short time on earth to do anything; let us then make good use of our time and opportunities (Jno. ix. 4; Deut. xxxii. 29).

3. Because there is no opportunity after death. We have no authority in Scripture, to believe that there is a state of future probation; or that there is Redemption beyond the grave (Eccles. ix. 10; 2 Cor. vi. 2).

4. Because of the eternal issue. If we are wise unto salvation, we shall be happy both here and hereafter. If we despise this Wisdom, we imperil our souls (Prov. iii. 35; Dan. xii. 2, 3).

PISGAH; OR, A PICTURE OF LIFE.

BY DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan.—DEUT. xxxiv. 1–7.

WE intend using this incident for a practical purpose, as a *picture* of life. Here we have—

I. **Life ending in the midst of labor.** When, from Pisgah's heights, the promised land lay outstretched before the eye of Moses, he must have felt that his work was far from completed. The tribes were to be conducted over the rolling Jordan; Jericho, with its massive defenses, was to be taken; the aborigines were to be exterminated; the land divided amongst the tribes; and the theocracy fully organized. But he must die. Ah! thus it is ever with us. Men, for the most part, die in the midst of their labor; but few, if any, in the last hour, feel that they have finished their work—done all they *might* have done, ought to have done, or purposed doing. The farmer leaves his field half plowed; the artist dies with unformed figures on the canvas; the tradesman is cut down in the midst of his merchandise; the statesman is arrested with great political measures on his hand; and ministers depart with many schemes of instructive thought and plans of spiritual usefulness undeveloped. If men die thus in the midst of labor we infer—

1. *That there should be cautiousness as to the work pursued.* There are trades, professions, and departments, of secular action, that are very lucrative, but unrighteous. It is a sad thing to die in the midst of unholy labor.

2. Earnestness in the prosecution of their calling. Our time is short: therefore, "Whatsoever our hands find to do," etc.

3. Attention to the moral influence of their labor, both on themselves and others. We should make our daily labor a means of grace: every secular act should *express* and *strengthen* those moral principles over which death has no power. All labor should have but one spirit; and that spirit the spirit of goodness—the life and happiness of the soul. Let there be one spirit, one great thought in all our labor, and then it will be everlastingly profitable to us. "For the deep, divine thought demolishes centuries and millenniums, and makes itself present through all ages."

II. **Here is life ending in the midst of earthly prospects.** The promised land—which had often passed before the imagination of Moses, buoying up his spirit amidst the trials and vexations of the wilderness—now expanded in all the charms of reality before him; but into those lovely scenes he was not to enter. He should not tread those hills, or walk those flowery meads. The imagination spreads out to most mortals bright prospects of worldly good; presents a sphere of "good things to come;" for "man never *is*, but always *to be* blest." This is especially the case with youth. How bright and glowing is their "promised land" of vision! Most die on some Pisgah, in the midst of prospects of earthly good they will never realize. If men die amidst prospects of good they never realize, then (1) human aspirations after the earthly should be moderated; and

then (2) human aspirations after the spiritual should be supreme.

III. **Here is life ending in the midst of physical strength.** "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." There was yet a manly strength in his limb, and a brightness in his eye. How large a proportion of the human family die in this state! "One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease, and quiet." "His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow." Death at any time is painful;—painful when the physical machinery has worn itself out; when the senses are deadened, the limbs palsied, and the current of life flows coldly and tardily in the veins. But far more painful is it when it comes in the midst of manly vigor and a strong zest for a prolonged existence.

Does not this view of life—ending in the midst of important labor, bright earthly prospects, and manly strength—predict a higher state of being for humanity beyond the confines of the grave? Yes! we shall live again to work out all our plans, and new ones form to be worked out anon; to enter every "promised land" of hope—

> Enjoy their ambrosial fruit,
> And the sweet fragrance of their soul-inspiring air,
> And die not till our deathless powers shall fade and faint.

WHAT IS DEATH?

BY THE REV. G. W. STORY.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.—Ecc. xii. 7.

FROM these words we do not secure a satisfactory answer to this important interrogation, but simply learn its consequence—separation of soul and body.

I. We do learn, however, that **death is the dissolution of a union.** The body returns to dust, while the spirit returns to God who gave it.

II. **It is also an end.** It terminates all relations earthly; it ends all plans; it severs all ties; it stops all toil, and dislodges all possessions.

III. **It is, however, a beginning.** Paul says, Heb. ix. 27: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment."

Not another probation: not annihilation: not an eternal sleep, but the judgment.

IV. **It is the seed-time of the future.** "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory."

All seed bearing fruit after its kind is a well-known law. So the importance of reconciliation to God, in order to be raised in glory.

V. It is most beautifully spoken of **as a sleep.** I. Thess. iv. 14: "Even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

Jesus, in speaking of the daughter of the nobleman, said: "She sleepeth."

(a) *Sleep.* A state of rest; a state of unconsciousness of earth events; all is hushed into quietness. Friends may be in the midst of affliction, but the dead know it not. The eyes of dear ones may be wet with tears, but the departed see them not. The hosts of earth may moan and wail, but the dead are not sensible to their anguish. They sleep; they rest.

VI. A beautiful thought in all this. We are separated from our burdensome body, an aching frame. Separated from toil, uncertainty, and trial.

We sleep. So restful; so at peace; so filled with the assurance of a wakening. A wakening not to earth's contests again, but to eternity's environments and associations, and glory.

Planted in death to spring up in life; *to live*, not in time, but in eternity—in eternal victories.

No more sickness; no more pain; no more sorrow, but rise to glory, and to enter upon our new life in a heavenly land, with God and Christ, and the sanctified.

EXTRACT FROM AN ADDRESS.

BY R. S. STORRS, D.D.

HE will be missed and mourned by the great societies to which he has given counsel and wisdom, and to which he has imparted of the courage and enthusiasm of his own courageous and far-seeing spirit. Yes; he is mourned to-day by multitudes who have never seen his face, or heard his voice, but who have been impressed, quickened, and morally molded by his luminous and stimulating thought as it has appeared in his printed discourses. He is mourned, indeed, by those who have never even read his sermons, but who have known that he was filling with power this eminent pulpit in this great and commanding metropolis, to which the eyes of the nation are all the time turned. They have known his steadfastness of purpose, his purity of aim and of endeavor, his fidelity to the Lord, and they have rejoiced in his character, while unfamiliar with his person. He has been to them a rock of strength in their own feebleness, a bulwark of defense against all assaults made on the Gospel. He has been such a living source of succor and encouragement to those on the far missionary fields along our frontiers, in other lands, in Africa and in India, under the palm trees and on coral reefs, not long since reddened with cannibal blood, the homes of savage men

and women, but now echoing with Christian song and prayer!

Hardly any other could have been called from life on earth in all our circles, the intelligence of whose death would have carried wider sorrow to the world than has his. It is a sorrow of the best, on either side of the separating seas. Yet we who have known him most intimately, and have met and heard him most frequently, have doubtless been most distinctly impressed by the peculiar combination of grace and of power which was in him. How often he used to bring out latent and precious meanings from texts, with which, as we thought, we had been thoroughly familiar, but all the secret of which we had not explored! He seemed sometimes to take off the surface words, to unclose the native gold beneath; at other times we felt that he would exhaust language in order to bring out the native force and meaning of the text. How steeped his mind was in Scriptural idioms both in sermon and in prayer! His clear apprehension and vivid conception of Christ as Heavenly Lord was the power of his ministry, as it was of his character. He felt himself a witness for the Master, and he meant to be, and was, a faithful and loyal master for Him. He was a man with a message—not a theorist, not a doctrinaire, not a mere instructor in theological propositions. He was here for the Master, whose glory was in all the Scripture, and whose presence

he felt in all his personal life and work. He had a message to deliver, and was straitened in spirit until it was delivered. So it was, indeed, that he became the eloquent preacher whom we knew. Every fiber of his being, physical and moral, came in to contribute to the intensity and power of his utterance, and brought men and women in such vast numbers to hear his words.

Tender as the soft and sunny meadow in summer was his spirit, while stern toward iniquity as the flintest rock.

But, perhaps, you did not know—I confess for myself that I did not—that which still remains in my thought as the consummating grace in all his character. . . . Our personal relations have been as intimate and affectionate as it is possible for those of two men to be, not living side by side, but at some little distance, yet often and gladly meeting. And yet, though I thought I knew him to the center, I did *not* understand that power of sovereign, conquering, God-given patience which he exhibited in the closing years of his life. Think of it, my friends! A man in the very fulness of vigor and power, with every faculty disciplined, with all the instruments of public speech at his perfect command, with his settled, steadfast, and mighty convictions of evangelical truth, and of the privilege of declaring this to men, having just reached the grand climacteric of his life, is suddenly overtaken by this unexpected and

subtle cerebral shock, is thrown aside from public service, shut within the doors of home, and admonished that his end on earth is not far distant. I wonder how many of us can say, "That was a strain which I could bear!" I say for myself, frankly, "I could not, thus and then, have borne it." And I went to his sick-chamber when I first heard of the stroke which had fallen upon him, timid, for the first time in my life, in my approach to him. It seemed to me impossible that there should not be a deep despondency, a dire depression, perhaps even something of painful rebelliousness against the divine will and appointment; certainly something of sadness and moroseness as he looked out upon the life which was swelling around him, and felt that in it he could never resume his place. Instead, I found a perfect peace and utter resignation to the divine will, a desire to have God's will accomplished in him, as it had been accomplished by Him. I took away more blessing from that sick-room than I had even dared to hope to carry thither. The maiden whose name is "Peace" was there. He was in the land of Beulah, where the shining ones walk. He was looking forward from the summit of the Delectable Mountains to the land and the city which are beyond. He wanted to live if he might; indeed, he longed to live, he prayed to live, that he might still further serve God and His Son in the ministry of the truth. Yet, whensoever the summons

should come, he was ready to "depart and be with Christ, which is far better." He accepted whatever had come. or should come, as the loving, divine appointment; and while I may forget many lessons of the truth which I have heard from his lips, and many inspirations to nobler work which I have received from his spirit, I shall never forget, while life continues, the benediction of that blessing which was on his face and in his utterance while I sat by his bedside and knelt there in prayer. It was the crown and consummation of all his character and of all his career.

NO NIGHT.

BY THE LATE REV. JAMES STEWART.

And there shall be no night there.—REV. xxii. 5.

JESUS CHRIST is with singular appropriateness called the Sun of righteousness.

This Sun is fixed in the moral horizon of the universe itself; and although the Light of the world, it is peculiarly the Light of Heaven.—"The Lamb is the light thereof." Hence it is said of the celestial world in the text, "There shall be no night there."

I. **There shall be no natural or physical night there.**

1. From the present constitution of our persons

the constant alternation of day and night is agreeable and necessary.

2. In Heaven, the nature of man shall be perfected, and he shall serve God day and night.

3. This provides for a large amount of service, and an uninterrupted enjoyment of pleasure.

II. **There shall be no intellectual night there i. e., perception of truth shall be clear and accurate.**

1. Here, our minds—

(*a*) Are long immature.

(*b*) Are clouded by disease.

(*c*) Are trammeled by prejudice.

(*d*) Are limited in their range of observation.

2. In Heaven—the reverse.

III. **There shall be no moral and spiritual night there.**

1. By a moral and spiritual night, is meant the concealment of the distinctions between right and wrong, and of God Himself, whose attributes are the foundation of such distinctions.

2. In the moral world—

(*a*) God in His moral attributes is the object.

(*b*) Christ is the Light in which He is seen.

(*c*) Holiness and union are the powers of vision.

3. In respect of these, this is night—Heaven is day.

IV. **There shall be no providential night there.**

1. By a providential night is meant the difficulty

of seeing God, and the laws of His government, in passing events.

2. The Providence of God, now, has to respect the disobedient who have rejected Christ—those for whom God waits—believers—those who have not heard of Christ; hence mixed.

3. In Heaven—simple and uniform.

V. **There shall be no night of affliction and death there.**

1. Death—a punishment, cannot be; and—

2. Affliction—discipline, not needed.

"Lift up your heads," ye righteous!
Hell, night—fear and flee, ye wicked!

COMFORT FOR THE SORROWING.

BY THE REV. G. G. WESTFALL.

But I would not have you ignorant, etc.—1 THESS. iv. 13, 14.

THIS is a world of sin, sorrow and death. No condition in life is proof against the immutable decree of God, "unto dust thou shalt return."

The sorrow brought into the home by death, casts a shadow over the domestic circle so deep, that only Jesus the "light of the world" can remove it.

I. **"We would not have you ignorant concerning" death.**

1. It is, in part, the penalty of sin. "So death passed upon all men," (Rom. v. 12.)

2. Death is an event of uncertainty to all in regard to time. Hence "be ye also ready, for at a time that ye think not."

3. Death is not annihilation; is not soul-sleeping; but the separation of the soul from the body

4. It is an event of deep solemnity. It ends probation; it separates friends and loved ones, and introduces the soul to other and nobler society. It is, to the Christian, the end of conflict and sorrow.

II. **The soul's destiny after death.**

1. It continues to live with all its powers, and essential identity.

2. It enters Heaven immediately after its severance from the body. It is prepared to enter. Christ has promised it. The death of Stephen, and the dying thief demonstrate it. Moses appeared with Christ on the mount 1483 years after his death on Mount Pisgah. Your loved one lives, reasons, and remembers, for all the powers remain and are glorified.

3. The perpetuation of being, and the certainty of well-being are secured by the life and perfections of God. The Christians is an "everlasting life."

III. **There shall be a resurrection of the body.**

1. Christ has promised this to every one who believeth in Him: "I will raise him up at the last day."

2. Christ's resurrection is the divine warrant of

ours. Human nature lives in awful and eternal union with the Godhead.

3. His glorified body is the *pattern* as well as the *pledge* of our resurrection.

IV. The same body that died shall rise. "*This* mortal," "*this* corruptible," not another.

It shall rise immortal, in power and in glory.

The whole nature of them who "sleep in Jesus" shall be glorified, and live forever with Christ in Heaven. This glorious hope we owe to Christ our Lord.

Beloved friends, you should be reconciled to the will and providence of God, for He is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind. Let this dispensation of Providence be, to all the relatives and friends, an admonition to be ready when the Master shall come. Trust in the merits and mediation of Christ your loving Lord. Keep continually in your hearts the Heavenly Comforter, and all will be well forever.

MAN'S LAST ENEMY CONQUERED.

BY THE REV. E. HEWITT.

I. CORINTHIANS XV. 26.

THE last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Christ—the greatness of his power—the certainty of his triumph—the extent and duration of his reign, are the great facts here set forth. Paul from his point of observation sweeps

the entire field of conflict, sees foe after foe falling before the advancing conqueror until the last enemy has surrendered and Christ is everywhere triumphant.

The text supplies us with a suitable and comforting theme for this sad time and place in, "*Man's last enemy conquered.*"

I. **Death an enemy.** Attempt to disguise it as you may by poetic description or pleasing figures of speech the fact remains that death is an enemy. An enemy whom money cannot bribe—strength defy or power defeat. An enemy blind to our tears—deaf to our prayers—unmindful of our grief. He has invaded our homes and robbed them of their light and joy. He has arrested our loved ones and borne them away to the gloomy prison-house of the grave. He has compelled us again and again in our anguish to cry out,

> "Oh for the touch of a vanished hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still!"

What death has done for our friends he will surely do for us. Each one of us can say with Job, "For I know that those will bring me to death and to the house appointed for all living." Some of us may die sooner than others, but all at last. We are marching in a great procession toward the grave. Death is an enemy, universal, untiring, irresistible, cruel.

II. **This enemy shall be destroyed.**

1. The Scriptures declare it. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth. (John v. 28–29.)

This chapter from which the text is taken is a masterly and unanswerable argument for the resurrection of the dead, and to every thoughtful person must put beyond reasonable question the fact of the final and irrecoverable overthrow of man's last enemy—Death.

2. Christ illustrated and proved the fact by raising from the dead the Ruler's daughter—the widow's son—Lazarus.

By his own resurrection, of which there can be no doubt. He then led captivity captive. His resurrection is the proof and pledge of ours.

Our last enemy shall be destroyed.

Let this thought comfort us in this sad hour. We may be compelled to bury our loved ones, but they shall surely live again. We may see them, and know them, and live with them forever.

a. Ungodliness is an attempt to dispense with God, and still be happy.

b. Each man makes the experiment.

c. You have made it.

d. What is the result? A failure!

III. **A consideration of the past will confirm the believer in the choice he has made.**

1. The most important part of a believer's life is that which follows his conversion.

2. In reviewing it, believers,

a. You see the temporal consequences of your act.

b. You see the spiritual consequences.

IV. **The past will show to the ungodly his eternity.**

1. Alas! the sinner is not qualified to see his eternity in his time.

VI. **The past shows to the believer the comparative measure in which he shall reap hereafter.**

Between the believer's present conduct and future glory,

1. There is no connection of merit.

2. But there is a connection of congruity, or fitness.

OUR YEARS AS A TALE THAT IS TOLD.

BY REV. JAMES STEWART.

"*We spend our years as a tale that is told.*"—PSALM XC. 9.

THIS is called a Psalm of Moses. It is thought to have been written when God declared of the murmuring Israelites, that they should die in the wilderness.

The shortness of human life has suggested many very beautiful comparisons—"flood"—"sleep"—"grass"—"flower;" and, among others, that of the text.

The telling of tales is, and was a common amusement and pastime in the East. The comparison would therefore be understood.

I.—**A tale is composed of incidents which are wholly fictitious and imaginary. In this point of view, the life of man has too close a resemblance to it. For—**

1. Human conduct is generally founded on, and regulated by false principles.

a. That there is no present, observing, and sin-punishing God.

b. That the pleasures of sin warrant and repay the hazard of its commission.

c. That the things of this world form a suitable portion for man.

d. That the relations which we stand in to eternity, may with safety be left out of sight.

e. That the end of life is the proper time for being reconciled to God.

2. The whole life of man is generally one gross and continued delusion. Hence a dream.

a. All admit this of childhood. These delusions are the fruit of the corruption of the nature.

b. They are fostered by men who are the active apostles of error.

c. They originate with the father of lies.

Do your lives bear a comparison to a tale in respect of these particulars?

1. Are they founded on these principles?

2. Do they exemplify such delusions?

II. **A tale is speedily ended, and is seemingly short, according to the interest it awakens.**

1. Life is soon over—often very soon—soon when longest.

2. Life is short by comparison. The aged oak—the ruin—the mountains.

3. Life is short, as a part of our existence.

4. Life is short for its assigned business.

5. Though short, it contains eternity.

How are you spending your short lives?

Have you been engaged in the proper business of life!

III. **A tale, when once told, is speedily forgotten,—not being knowledge, it is not retained.**

The incidents of life are forgotten—last year.

1. Their importance being underrated, they are unnoticed.

2. No record is kept of them, though noticed.

3. You have an impression that you have done with them.

4. You wish to escape from the feelings which the thought of them creates.

5. Because you are engrossed in the present and future.

IV. **A tale is useless, and is told as a pastime.**

There is such a thing as killing time—for we

have not only the thing, but the name, it should be called, "killing the soul."

1. Many of the more serious employments are made to serve this end.

b. Many devices are fallen upon, in order to kill time—literature—social meetings—more public assemblies—idleness.

c. False estimate—cannot recall!

How have you spent this past year?

EARNEST EXPECTATION OF THE CREATURE.

By Rev. James Stewart.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, etc.—Rom. viii. 19–23.

IN the eighteenth verse, present sufferings are compared with future glory.

The feelings produced by the comparison break forth in the statements under consideration.

This passage directs our attention to—

I. **The final consummation of the believer's salvation.**

The close of the nineteenth and twenty-third verses.

Among the Romans there was a twofold adoption here alluded to.

1. Private—when the individual formed and expressed his purpose to adopt.

2. Public—when the action was solemnized in the Forum, enrolled, and a register kept of it.

In the former of these senses, the believer is already adopted by God (1 John iii. 1; Rom. viii. 16, 17).

1. The act of adoption is past.
2. The work of regeneration is begun.
3. The title to the inheritance is good.
4. In a word, the tie is formed.

In the latter of these senses, the believer shall be adopted at the consummation referred in the text.

1. It is called, "the manifestation of the sons of God."

(*a*) The legal act of their adoption is published. Of Christ it is said, when openly enthroned, "This day have I begotten Thee."

(*b*) They shall themselves be revealed in their privileges and glory (1 John iii. 2).

2. It is called, "the adoption," and "the redemption."

(*a*) The reason why it is called "the adoption" has already been stated.

(*b*) The manifestation of the sons of God shall be at the resurrection.

(*c*) The resurrection shall complete the manifestation.

How are the stages through which the believer passes in recovering!

The believer is incomplete till the resurrection

II. **The intense sympathy of the creation with the salvation and glory of the believer.**

1. The meaning of the words "creation" and "creature," forms the difficulty of this passage. That it is the irrational and natural world appears from—

(*a*) Nineteenth verse. A distinction between the creature and the sons of God.

(*b*) Twentieth verse. Unwillingness is ascribed to the creature, and could not be to man (Rom. i. 21, 28); Adam's act voluntary.

(*c*) Twenty-first verse. A distinction again drawn. "The creature itself," an expression inapplicable to mankind collectively.

2. The creature thus understood, intensely longs for the time of man's elevation to fulness of glory. "Earnest expectation" — "outstretched neck."

3. The creature or creation not only looks for, but urges on that event. "Travaileth in pain"—"together"—"until now."

4. The reasons of this are threefold, viz.:

(*a*) Its state, "subject to vanity."

(*b*) Not of choice, "not willingly."

(*c*) This state not lasting, and to be succeeded by one of glory (ver. 21).

God has written man's condemnation and misery on all things.

God has written man's recovery upon all things.

God reproves man's inertness by the very inanimate world.

III. **The state of longing expectation in which the people of God now are.**

1. The description given of believers "which have the first-fruits of the Spirit." Forming—

(*a*) A foretaste.

(*b*) A pledge.

2. The present state or condition of believers.

(*a*) They are burdened and oppressed.

(1) They groan.

(2) Secretly.

(*b*) They earnestly look forward. "Not only they, but we ourselves also," etc.

(*c*) They wait. "Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." Hasten!

EXTRACT FROM DISCOURSE AT THE GRAVE OF AUGUSTUS WILHELM NEANDER.

BY DR. F. W. KRUMMACHER.

AND, alas! he will henceforth walk no more among us, the man who was truth and clearness, a crystal penetrated by the rays of a higher sunlight; as he was our pride, so he was our joy and renovation, and to whom we were accustomed to point, if there was need of the active proof of the truth, that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God to make holy and happy, those who believe in it! He will walk no more among us!

His eagle eye has gone out. The noble casket, so rich in the treasures of wisdom and love, has broken. Yet, let us speak no longer in this strain. We, indeed, know where we have him. What this coffin incloses, is not indeed he, but only the garment of dust which he has laid aside. A prophecy, and at the same time a direction for us where we might seek him, where the half-dreaming words that fell from his dying lips: "I am weary; let us get ready and go home!" Yes, upwards the looks of faith and of hope! For such noble sheaves there is a barn of God! Oh if he could only now give us an account of Chrysostom and his Augustine, and his Bernhard, and all the others, with whom he is now encamped among the eternal palms of peace, and shares the crown of honor! Yet, if it were permitted once more to speak to us, he would be silent respecting them, and overflow with the commendation and praise of one only, his Lord and Mediator, Jesus Christ, who was, and is, and remains, his whole salvation and life, and to whom he cried out from his window, as we have to-day already been reminded, on his last birthday anniversary, acknowledging himself before all the world to be the poorest of sinners, with an agitated voice and tears in his eyes, in similar strains to one of the fathers: "I have not loved thee strongly, not deeply, not warmly enough, O Love!" Now he loves Him as he always wished to love Him.

Let then his mortal tenement sink down into its grave. Even it, "seed sown by God to be ripe at the day of harvest." Oh may this grave, even after centuries, shine with wreaths of thanks! Let us depart from this place to-day with the comfortable consciousness: "this disciple dies not;" in the elevating view of the sublime, prophetic image: "They that be wise (the teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever;" with the awakening and admonishing sound of the Apostolical command: "Remember those who have gone before you, who have taught you the word of God; behold the end of their conversation, and imitate their faith." With the prayerful wish that the memory of our friend Neander may be a blessing to the old and young, to our contemporaries, and to future generations; and with the lines of the sonnet, expressive of one now already blessed—

"Although love, indeed may weep,
The day of the Lord will come;
A morning star will arise
After the darkness of night!

Let even hope be terrified,
Let death and the grave shout,
A dawning morn will one day
Awake the slumbering dead." *Amen.*

DISTRESSING BEREAVEMENTS UNDER AFFECTING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness. PSALM lxxxviii. 18.

LIFE a state of trial,—called to submit to the discipline of Providence, to acquire right views, principles, habits: to be prepared for a place at God's right hand.—Life a varied scene: some called to endure much.—Pious not exempt: share in national, domestic, individual calamities. —May continue long: prayers, hopes, exertions of no avail. Psalm describes heavy affliction,—writer wise; little inferior to Solomon (1 Chron. ii. 6),—encompassed with trouble; near the grave, —considered dead,—friends ignorant, or regardless of his calamities,—probably in prison,—heard the wind whistle through the grates.—Moreover, divine wrath upon him, and every consolation denied,—"wearier night succeeded wearier day; and bitterer was the grief devoured alone."—Melancholy, meditation! "Lover," etc. In our text may be noticed,

PART I.

I. **The connections which impart comfort to Life.**—Life is not destitute of comfort,—creation, indeed, under a curse: but miseries may often be traced to individual misconduct.—Godliness is profitable; and the regular, pious, and holy, are known and esteemed.

1. *Lover.* Love, a passion common to the human race, includes a desire to promote another's happiness; affection bounded by reverence; result of approbation.—Promoted and hallowed by Christian principles.

2. *Friend.* Friendship implies mutual attachment; kindness accepted, acknowledged, returned; or, mutual perception, approbation of amiable and respectable qualities.—Unreasonable expectations, fickleness, unfaithfulness, have induced some to call it a mere name; contradicted by experience and by the page of inspiration: David and Jonathan, Paul and Timothy. The great example without a miracle, drew from the lips of malice, "Behold how He loved him!"—Christianity calls it brotherly love; "Poor is the friendless master of a world!" Many of us feel a melancholy pleasure in tracing the varied incidents of friendship.—The spontaneous kindness of our departed sister was experienced by all denominations of missionaries; and the memorial thereof will accompany the spread of the Gospel. Free from party spirit, we closed our interviews with prayer for the whole estate of Christ's church, preceded by that beautiful hymn, "Arise my soul, and spread thy wings, thy better portion trace," etc. Yes; "one family, we dwell in Him: one church," etc. Christians are lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they are not divided. A third connection is,

3. *Mine acquaintance.* Love and friendship blended, increased, established into fellowship. [Prayer-book *ver.* lovers and friends, *pl.*; acquaintance, as here, *sing.*] Authorized to believe he means his help-meet, the doubler of joy, divider of grief. The mourning widower of our departed friend may adopt the sentiment.—She had my preference; honored me with approbation, and sacramental acts have declared our mutual resolution to participate in all—ease and pain, joy and woe. We have realized the same;—united in an enterprise the most important—crossed oceans—in "distant, barbarous climes, rivers unknown to song, where first the sun gilds Indian mountains." Alas! her days are past, her purposes are broken off; oh! delicious, though mournful recollection, "The coals thereof," etc. Hearers behold, admire, imitate her devotion to the blessed work. Bade adieu—repaired to "the farthest verge of the green earth." Perceiving her accomplishments, and fitness for an enterprise less hazardous, a Judas may inquire, "To what purpose is this waste?" but the observing Master utters the reproof, "Trouble not the woman, she hath done a good work; it shall be told for a memorial." Our text shows us,

PART II.

II. **The loss of connections.**—Life essentially composed of perpetual change rather than of per-

manence; "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow,—all flesh is as grass, and," etc. The noblest triumphs are soon over:—

> "Earth's highest station ends in, 'Here he lies.'
> And, 'Dust to dust,' concludes their noblest song."

1. *The writer had lost all, and "despaired even of life."* Sick and in prison, without a visitor,—surrounded by scenes of woe,—ray of rising sun, struggling through a crevice, and darting on the gloomy wall, denoted the comfort of others, and his individual misery. No written letter, of printed gazette,—condition aggravated by suspense and uncertainty. [The *Habeas Corpus* then unknown.]

2. *Lovers and friends are lost by desertion and removal.* Excess of attachment itself promotes it:—extravagant expectations not being realized, or reciprocal, end in disappointment; if moral cure unwrought thereby, proportionate dislike; circumstances promote it,—difference of genius, followed by varied pursuits and habits of reflection.—Early connections where? In as many directions as the mariner's compass.—Often these separations are acutely painful. The disappointed lover gets sympathy. Not the passion, but the situation interests. The spectator cannot conjecture the possibly desperate consequences.

3. The *missionary*, by removal, may be said to "suffer the loss of all things." Friends and

brethren—no probability of regaining any thing analogous abroad. Perhaps his hardest lesson may be to learn what St. Paul places first among his apostolic accomplishments (1 Cor. iv. 10). "We are *fools* for Christ's sake." In becoming a missionary, he not only parts from all that is dear, but, humiliating reflection! he forfeits the reputation arising from his ministerial and literary character; in attempting to speak a foreign language, he appears a fool to all intents and purposes. The nature and difficulties of his work, and the requisite talents and tempers, are neither sufficiently understood nor duly appreciated.

4. *Bereavement.* Appointed to die—to make room for the next blooming race—to answer the ends of justice and mercy. First falsehood, "Ye shall not die." First sentence, "Ye shall." How impartial! "Neither doth God respect any person." *Margin,* "knows no faces." Usefulness, zeal for his glory, dignity, royalty, no exemption. "House appointed for all living."

5. *Our friend has gone far from us.* Far from us at the period of her departure to eternity—from her husband—acuteness thereby heightened—final solemnity mournful in the extreme;—on an island in the midst of the rolling ocean; in a distant part of another hemisphere; she, like Doddridge and Whitefield, returned no more, or saw again her native country:—

"By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed,
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned:
By strangers honored, and by strangers mourn'd!"

III. **In removals we should trace the agency of God.** Immediate instrument, tyranny. Though severe, and knew God was good, the writer attributes his calamities to him: "Thou hast," etc.

1. *God has the sovereign disposal of all.*—All nature, all classes of beings. Can justly do what we cannot do without injustice. Neither our duty nor privilege to account for, or complain. Principles of divine government we know; righteousness and judgment;—but individual acts are wrapped in clouds and darkness. Sometimes reproves kings,—"touch not mine anointed." Other times removes pillars from the church: Baptist, Abel, etc., yet says, "Friend, I do thee no wrong."

2. *Wisdom and goodness displayed in our sufferings.* "Too wise to err," etc. Eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth,—revolutions, battles, kings ascending, counsels advising, yet, "not a sparrow falls," etc. Great and small observed by Him. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows,"—than many men. But when the volume of providence shall be opened, righteousness and rigor, mercy and vengeance, will be explained to an assembled universe. The faith of God's people, that the "Judge of all the earth will

do right," will be "found unto praise, and honor, and glory;"—an echo will resound through earth and heaven, "Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and power unto the Lord our God, for true and righteous are His judgments."

IV. **Our improvement is designed in all dispensations.** We may improve the present.

1. By *sympathy*. "Weep with them that weep,"—show fellow-feeling. See the disorganized family mourning apart! A melancholy page in the mission history. Let your sympathy alleviate the grief; imitate angels, for—

> "From above descending spirits move,
> To wipe the falling tear from mortal eyes;
> To bring to earth the nectar of the skies;
> To blend with human griefs their angel sympathies."

2. By *gratitude*. How many favors pass away unheeded! Think of the blessed portion of the righteous. Light affliction—weight of glory.

3. By *resignation*. Many evils inevitable. Heaven begun, but not completed below. Religion refines, ennobles man.—God our guide.

4. By *preparation*. Every moment hastens our ends,—every funeral a sermon.—"Be ye also ready,"—live to God,—be zealous in His service,—and "living or dying, Christ is gain."

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL C. JOHNSON.

Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.—MATT. xxiv. 44.

THESE words may with the strictest propriety be applied to the day of death. Its approach may be sudden and unexpected, involving solemn and eternal consequences. The text, therefore, calls every one to make preparation for the hour of dissolution, so uncertain, and yet absolutely sure. Death will be to us as if the last trumpet had sounded, and the Son of God had appeared in all his effulgent glory to judge the quick and the dead. All our thoughts, motives and actions will be scrutinized by the great Arbiter of life and death, and the quality of them will determine the nature of our everlasting abode; and the day of judgment will only be the confirmation of that state of eternal existence, with the addition of the body united to the soul by the resurrection, to partake of its pleasures, or share its woes.

I. **What are we to be ready for?** Is it not the coming of Christ? There is nothing so certain in the world or in the progress of human life as death. If we had the riches of earth we could not bribe it to pass us by. If we had the wings of an angel we could not fly from it.

How often is death seen in every-day life!

The unseen arrow strikes when least expected. In the watches of the night, at the morning dawn, at high noon or at the going down of the sun. In the home among friends or away among strangers. At the workshop or in the street.

In you saw a vessel tossed upon the stormy sea, without rudder or a pilot, and the angry waves every moment threatening to engulf her, or to dash her in pieces on the rocks, would you not call her position a critical one? Souls are infinitely in a worse situation, tossed upon life's tempestuous sea without hope or compass or pilot.

II. **Why are we to be ready?** Because death is a great event; it is sure to come; nothing can prevent it. This is the only period in which we can prepare for death. There is no middle state. No purgatorial fires. "As the tree falleth, so it lies." Life is short. Strip a life empty and it will seem long enough. To the busy, well employed, time passes rapidly. To the idle time crawls, but to the busy it flies. Life is short to the Christian, but long to the wicked. We are to be ready that we may be a help to some one.

III. **When are we to be ready?** Now, because the time of death's approach is uncertain. "For in such an hour."

Do you not know that when your time of intercourse is short with any one, your relations with that one grow true and deep? Two men who have lived side by side for years with business

and social life between them, with a multitude of suspicions and concealments and misunderstandings. Let them know that they have only an hour more to live together, and as they look into each other's eyes do not the suspicions, concealments and misunderstandings all disappear. They know each other. Ready to do all they can for each other in those moments that remain. They intended to have an understanding some months or years before, but kept putting it off until death stared them in the face and judgment was upon them. My friends, the best time, perhaps, in all the world is to make peace with God now. "Therefore be ye also ready."

FAITH AND HOPE IN THE REDEEMER OF MEN.

BY THE REV. J. EDMONDSON.

For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.—JOB. xix. 25–27.

I. **Confident that his Redeemer would raise him from the dead, Job proceeds to say, Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.** The afflictions of Job were great. He had lost his property, his children, and his health.

Job expected, after his skin was destroyed, that the whole body would perish. "Though after my skin worms destroy my body." Worms are not named in the original. Our translators supplied the word, under a notion that worms had destroyed the skin. How far the opinion is correct we know not; but Job expected that the destruction of his body would quickly follow the destruction of his skin.

But Job had a joyful hope of a resurrection from the dead. Hence he positively affirms, that, after the destruction of his body, he should see God in his flesh. But how could he hope for that, if "the dead rise not at all?" Man is a compound being. His body is made of the dust; but his spirit was from God. He now lives in an embodied state; and he will live in an embodied state to all eternity. But that cannot be without a resurrection; because his present earthly frame must perish in the grave. How God will raise the dead is unknown; but the fact is certain. It was revealed to Job; it was well known to Daniel; and it is proved, beyond all doubt, by the resurrection of Jesus. With these eyes of flesh, though greatly changed, we shall see our God and Saviour.

II. **Job was quite certain that he should see his Redeemer for himself: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: though my reins be consumed within me.**

Blessed hope! Good men wish well to all mankind; but they claim the blessings of grace and glory as their own. Thus every believer says, Others shall see the Redeemer with joy, but I shall see Him for *myself*.

Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ; and "he saw it, and was glad" (John viii. 56). Moses and all the prophets foretold that day; and thus Jesus was the hope of enlightened and pious men in the early ages of the world. He is our only Redeemer and Saviour. We are lost; but He came to seek and to save us. We have many enemies; but He will conquer them all. We are dead; but He is the "resurrection and the life." Let us repose entire confidence in Him; and rest assured, that, because He liveth, we shall live also. He rose from the dead; and we shall rise. He entered into glory; and we shall ever live and sing His praise! *Amen.*

EXTRACT FROM FUNERAL ADDRESS.

BY DANIEL CURRY, D. D.

ON occasions like this in which we are now engaged, one is often called upon to render active services when all his feelings seem to impose silence rather than call for words. In this spirit I approach the duties of this hour. We come together to-day, as we often do, from our

various occupations, at the call of death—an event that is constantly occurring around us, and within the range of our families and acquaintances. It is one of the common and ever-recurring events in human affairs that people die. Those whom we have known are known no more. Those we love are taken away from us. There are lessons in these events which we have, I trust, learned, and yet they need to be constantly repeated. The silent preacher who speaks to us from the coffin on every occasion of a death teaches us that this is not our abiding-place, that we are in the land of the dying, and are rapidly passing away. It is good for us, in the midst of these circumstances, to pause and to think, and seriously contemplate ourselves and our affairs, and to realize that our stay here is but for a little while. As we look out upon society, we find that death strikes all classes. His strokes fall alike on the feeble and the strong and valiant, the young and the aged. Within the circling years of the century, all at some point will pass away. It is good, then, for us to be instructed by these things, to lay them to heart, and to live in view of them. Nothing is less rational, less wise, less devout than the disposition of mind that some affect—and even labor to cultivate—to forget these things, and not to lay them to heart. We are to remember them for practical purposes, that we may see the emptiness and vanity of life. Life, as we

view it at a distance, presents a very inviting field, with large expectations and glowing possibilities. In childhood and in early youth we have a world of plans and designs, of high purposes and promises; but, while we are busy with these, engaged in our efforts and often failing in them, life's morning is passed, its noonday is upon us, the afternoon is closing around us, and we wake to the realization that life is practically spent; and we wonder and say how short the years! Then, if we look forward to the possibilities of the future, we find that they promise us but little. No time remains in which to develop new plans, nor to accomplish results, and the reckoning shows us that we have already occupied the chief part of our lifetime—that little else remains for us but to die.

THE REDEMPTION OF TIME.

BY D. C. EDDY, D.D.

Redeeming the time because the days are evil EPH. v. 16

I. Time is short.
II. Time is valuable.
III. Time has already been misspent.
IV. The present days are evil.
V. Time should be redeemed because a great work is to be done in it.

THE SENSE OF MORTALITY.

BY THE REV. ANDREW GRIFFIN.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. PSALM XC. 12.

PART I.

THE sense of mortality is felt by men in very different degrees. Some live in full view of their end, others live almost oblivious of death; they see only the light and brightness of existence, not its shades and darknesses. Each class justifies itself; the wisest course lies between the two extremes. Wisdom is shown in thinking of our mortality—wisdom is also shown in fully appreciating the charms and duties of life.

We shall now show the variety of blessings dispensed to different classes by the right use of the *sense of mortality.*

I. **It may be an antidote for the sorrowful.** Reflect, "there is an end." "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning" in your case, because in leaving the world you will have but little to lose and much to gain. Here you have neither health, nor wealth, nor prospect, perhaps. Number your days—see how brief a weeping time it is, and remember at last you will have less to weep for than others. There is an equality—you sigh in life; the prosperous sigh to leave life.

Some men are like flowers—they grow, and thrive and are admired as long as they remain in their

native soil; removal is fatal. Others are like gems in the laboratory—in this world they are neither valued nor admired, except by the Divine workman who sees their inward excellence." The poor gem, after being cut, and handled, and polished in the dim shop, may well feel no regret when removed to another and brighter sphere.

II. **It should be a restorative to the laboring.** Yours is not a life of sorrow but of exertion. There is a pleasure in toil, yet that pleasure would be greatly marred were it not for the hope of rest at last.

The day is far spent—the night is at hand. Work, then, while it is called to-day. The brevity of the season of labor should stimulate to greater fidelity and exertion.

Let us "quit ourselves like men." Let there be no craven cowardice. Bend to the task with a stout heart. Let there be no weak yielding to lethargy. Let us work with all our might. Let there be no unfaithful loitering. All work for God demands all our energy and attention.

III. **It should be a remedy for the impatient.** Life is a monotony to you. Mystery oppresses you. You long to penetrate into the *vast interior* of eternity. You regard human theology, philosophy, and science as childishly elementary. Mere nursery rhymes! first lesson books!

If the lesson book be elementary, you are but a child. If the class be the lowest, it is proportion-

ate to your age. Curb your impatience with the knowledge of the brevity of life.

If you be a child of God, your promotion will not tarry, or be far off. It is but a step between you and death; the region for which you long is just over Jordan. You are a year nearer to it to-night! Were you long in coming? Has not the time glided by without *a pause?*

Lift up your heart to the station for which you are destined, and comfort your soul with the song—

> "There shall I see, and hear and know,
> All I desired or wished below;
> And every power find sweet employ,
> In that eternal world of joy."

IV. **As a balm to the wounded in heart.** Is your soul stricken because friendships, which began in admiring partiality and tender consideration, have nothing to distinguish them now but hollow urbanity and concealed indifference? or has slander ascribed to your gentle nature harshness and hardness of which you are incapable? or has enmity stabbed you to the soul, and gloried in your wounds? Consider how short your time is. A few years and you will be lying—as regards the body—in yonder graveyard; a few more, and no human breast shall live, or, at least, live in possession of cold, or cruel, or malicious feelings toward you.

Jesus tells us not to fear even those whose malice would extend to murder. "Be not afraid

of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do"; for that future country is inviolable, as far as invaders of our peace are concerned. There "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest; there the prisoners rest together—they hear not the voice of the oppressor."

V. **As a corrective for the worldly.** To you the concerns of life are so absorbing—its gains and duties so engrossing—that you would be almost, if not altogether, as content to live here always as to depart hence. Indeed, you may be so wedded to this world, that it would cause you no pain if it were demonstrated that you would be a never-dying inhabitant of this world. I pray you remember, "the world passeth away and the *desire* thereof."

There is nothing permanent but the practice and fruits of piety. Without this, we may have prosperity, honor, station, and happiness here, without reaping the least advantage from them hereafter; indeed, these may make eternity less tolerable, and our condemnation more severe.

Stop, then, for a moment in the midst of all your pursuits; consider that the prosperity and comforts in which you find your earthly home as a house built upon the sands. We are all dwellers on the shore of the sea of eternity, waiting for transit, I trust, to a better country. Our Father in heaven would not have us spend our waiting time

in misery and privation. He would have us build our house. Yes, and garnish it—and rest in it—and honor Him in it. He would also have us remember it is built upon the sands; that its luxury, comforts, and all that pertains to it must vanish away. That it is but a temporary shelter.

VI. **As a sedative to the frivolous.** Cheerfulness, aye, holy mirth are duties, but they are not our only duties; there is a time to weep as well as a time to laugh. Young men and maidens, life is not for *pleasure*, albeit it has many pleasures. You are beings who have to take part in momentous and awful scenes hereafter. Habitual gaiety may steel your heart to the voice of reason and of God. The little child (as, I think, Baxter says), who in a serious moment would not transgress the father's will, may be led to do so in the excitement of playfulness.

Life is for *faith!* for work! for prayer! for repentance!

A MAN DYING.

And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.—JOSH. xxiii. 14.

I. **Here is a man dying in philosophic calmness,** "I am going the way of all the earth."

1. It is not a *strange* road. All that have ever been, have gone through it; and all that ever will be, must.

2. It is not an *avoidable* road. I must go through it. To complain is useless; go I must, I bow calmly to destiny.

II. **Here is a man dying fully satisfied with God.** "Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake." Through the whole course of his life,—trying, perilous, and laborious, as that life had been,—he had no fault to find with his Maker. Nay, he declares the contrary: he declares:

1. That God had promised "good things."

2. That all the "good things" promised had come. It is interesting to see a man leaving the earth satisfied with all the dealings of God.

III. **Here is a man dying with spiritual interest in survivors.** "Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls. He wished his contemporaries and survivors to cherish confidence in God when he was gone.

CONCLUSION.

Who would not have in dying the feelings of this dying Joshua? Philosophically calm, deeply religious, spiritually philanthropic? Does not such a death prophesy a future state?

DYING IS THE CROWN OF LIFE.

"Were death denied, poor man would live in vain,
Death wounds to cure; we fall, we rise, we reign,
Spring from our fetters, hasten to the skies.
When blooming Eden gathers on our right,
The King of terrors is the prince of peace."

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